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The Nation.

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WILL THE PROGRESSIVE MAJORITY EMERGE?

by RICK PERLSTEIN

JULY 9, 2007
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LETTERS

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

SCRAP 'NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND'!

Cambridge, Mass.

■ Would that Congress had consulted Linda Darling-Hammond, Pedro Noguera, Velma Cobb and Deborah Meier when drafting No Child Left Behind ["Evaluating 'No Child Left Behind,'" May 21]. They lay out a powerful case for why NCLB needs fundamental reform if it is to help us "pay off the educational debt to disadvantaged students that has accrued over centuries of unequal access to quality education."

Darling-Hammond cites the work of the Forum on Educational Accountability (FEA) in building a consensus for a new NCLB that would shift the law's emphasis "from applying sanctions for failing to raise test scores to holding states and localities accountable for making the systemic changes that improve student achievement." The Joint Statement on NCLB has been signed by 121 education, civil rights, religious, disability and civic organizations, a constituency of more than 50 million people. These voices are beginning to be heard, but much more must be done.

Congressional committees are writing legislation. Now is the time to act. Contact your senators and Representative today. Tell them NCLB should not be reauthorized until its serious flaws are fixed. Ask them to contact the Education Committee and press for adoption of the FEA's legislative recommendations.

Rather than just test and punish, the new federal law proposed by FEA would improve schools through high-quality professional development for teachers and administrators; involve parents more deeply in school improvement; enable families to participate better in their children's education; continue to assess and report student learning but based on multiple measures, not just test scores. Expectations for achievement would be realistic, based on rates of improvement actually achieved by schools. Targeted assistance would replace sanctions (see www.edaccountability.org). Monty Neill

Chair, Forum on Educational Accountability

New York City

■ I've had a lot of contact with NCLB, a flawed program but, on balance, well worth having. Contrary to the position taken by the *Nation* forum, NCLB has had a beneficial effect on education. It has surfaced widespread performance failures in reading and math, and required educators to get better results. Most objections raised are just pie-in-the-sky. *Of course* we'd do a better job if we eliminated poverty, secured trained dedicated teachers, mobilized parents and raised the education budget. Other objections are just wrong. Reliance on multiple-choice questions is not an error but the best way to measure performance quickly. Teaching to the test is not wrong. The test appropriately requires students to read and analyze long selections and to solve math problems. A lot of practice is essential. It's true we've reduced time spent in music and art, but it was because we wisely doubled time spent in math and reading. Stuart Margulies

Former member, Johnson Task Force on Poverty and Education

Tucson

■ The NCLB forum identified the nonacademic needs of children. But no one said unequivocally what must be said: No program aimed at educational improvement that fails to address those nonacademic needs head-on, fully financed and with passionate support by the government can possibly achieve significant educational gain.

Clinton's Goals 2000 and Bush's NCLB deceived the public into believing significant change was in the offing, muffled their critics for years and, because there was little if any improvement, succeeded in reinforcing racist views about the innate inferiority of "those people" (blacks, Latinos and poor whites).

Americans must learn that even good teachers have difficulty contending with the consequences of depreciated parental earnings, parental exhaustion, malnourishment, homelessness and unattended health problems. There is no alternative: Societal change *must* accompany educational change.

This emphatic statement is not just a theoretical bias. The social ferment in the 1960s led to President Johnson's Great Society programs and to a seeming change in consciousness toward the view that the government was really for them. The result, as psychologists Wendy Williams and Stephen Ceci reported, was that the gap in IQ and achievement-test scores between blacks and whites was halved in fifteen years. This trend came to a grinding halt with Reagan's presidency, marked as it was by racist code words, so-called small government and freedom to profit with little oversight to protect workers and the poor.

The sad record of workers' wages since Reagan shows that little has changed: The top 5 percent, if not 1 percent, control America's policies. The time is overdue for the bottom 95 percent to wrest control. *That* is the road to true educational reform for 100 percent of the population. Milton Schwebel

Emeritus Dean, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University

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Sacramento, Calif.

■ There is a hole in the dialogue: the voice of the classroom teacher. Any experienced classroom practitioner will tell you that if you have not worked in a public school classroom continuously during the past five years or so, it would be presumptuous to assume an understanding of the impact this law has had on practice, pedagogy and the welfare of our children. Most teachers are eager to jump into the twenty-first century, re-evaluate practice, assessment and professional development—if we can. The dictatorial mandates associated with the fear of failing APIs and AYPs have undermined the educational system. Teachers are on the front line. We have a clear view and feel the impact of inequalities, the focus on testing, the narrowed curriculum and, primarily, the effect this has on our students. Janet Kouzel

Eidson, Tenn.

■ As a retired high school mathematics teacher, I remember studies on educational effectiveness in my own school. Never was a "front line, in the trench" teacher asked for an opinion. My recommendations for improving the schools are: Limit class size to no more than twenty-three students. Teachers with more students tend to go into "defensive perimeter" action. All schools should mandate a locally approved school uniform. The academies and charter schools have uniforms (and it makes it easier to identify an intruder). Make parental involvement mandatory. Create textual, audiovisual support of all classes available to parents. Make pay scales between administrators and teachers comparable, if not equal. Require all school systems to give teachers sabbaticals. Administrators should be expected to teach classes, and professors of education must be required to teach school every three or four years so they can experience the changes in student thought and behavior. I laugh when I remember a professor who said, when the topic of student discipline came up, "Gum chewing must be strictly controlled."

Allen Lee Hurley

La Mesa, Calif.

■ If only the Education Department would follow Linda Darling-Hammond's model in assessing our nation's schools. Having served public education in three states as an English teacher, special education teacher, middle school principal and director of special services, I have watched the multiple-choice measurement of student achievement diminish student incentive and teacher motivation, not to mention innovative school programs.

The true purpose of the current Education

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Printed June 20 Volume 285, Number 2

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EDITORIALS

Eyeless in Gaza

The sharp escalation of the power struggle between Hamas and Fatah, ending with Fatah's sudden collapse and the seizure of power in Gaza by Hamas, is a tragic turn of events for the Palestinian national movement—but it's also bad news for Israel, even though some Israeli strategists mistakenly thought it was a good idea to foment civil strife. Although the conflict was abetted by Israel and the United States, neither should be happy with the results, which will vastly complicate the already dismal chances for a peaceful resolution of the wider conflict. The recent events are a shocking demonstration of the failure of Bush Administration policy in the region.

This disaster has many fathers. The steady growth of the Islamist movement cannot be understood apart from the long-term US and Israeli strategy of undermining the secular Palestinian leadership. In 1993 PLO leader Yasir Arafat promised his people that the Oslo peace process would result in a Palestinian state. Instead, Israeli settlements rapidly expanded during the Oslo period, even as the Israeli closure policy—which began in 1993 and has never let up—shut off Palestinian workers from the Israeli labor market and limited freedom of movement inside the territories, resulting in severe economic depression. Popular disillusionment with the failures of Oslo helped bring about the second intifada in the fall of 2000. During that uprising, the Israeli government, blaming Arafat and the Palestinian Authority for violence, did everything it could to weaken the PA leadership. It continued that policy when Mahmoud Abbas was elected president after Arafat's death. Further undermining secular Palestinian leadership was its corruption and misrule. The gold-plated palaces of potentates like Muhammad Dahlan were a standing insult to a Gaza population mired in desperate poverty.

The more direct cause of the Gaza mini-war lies in the Bush Administration's cynical manipulation of "democracy promotion." This scheme has its origins in the attempts, five years ago, to push Arafat aside in favor of more pliable leaders, hence the steady calls from the Administration for "reform" and elections. The Israeli government, with US approval, imprisoned Arafat in Ramallah and then all but ignored Abbas, never pursuing serious negotiations or releasing prisoners, even as it continued construction of the separation wall and expansion of settlements in the West Bank. This further weakened Abbas and the secular leadership in the eyes of Palestinians. Ariel Sharon's disengagement from Gaza was carried out without any consultation with Abbas's government, which allowed Hamas to claim that Islamist resistance had forced the pullout. When elections were finally held early last year, Palestinians rejected the discredited Fatah slate in favor of Hamas, whose victory had far more to do with the Islamist movement's lack of corruption and record as a provider of social services—and its image of uncompromising resistance to occupation—than popular support for its ideology.

Although the polling was remarkably open and democratic, the White House and the Israelis immediately set out to undermine the Hamas government through economic boycott and military subversion, funneling arms to Fatah militias. (According to recently retired UN special envoy Alvaro de Soto, the US special envoy said earlier this year, "I like this violence," referring to increased fighting between Hamas and Fatah, because "it means that other Palestinians are resisting Hamas.") Many observers were surprised at the quick collapse of Fatah, assuming its superior numbers and weaponry would be decisive, but no amount of arms or numbers of men in uniform can make up for discredited leadership and lack of motivation among the rank and file. The plain fact is that more and more Palestinians have

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The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the second week in January, and biweekly the third week of July through the second week of September) by The Nation Company, L.P. © 2007 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, L.P., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149, or call 1-800-333-8536. Publications Mail Agreement No: 40041477. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept. or DPGM, 4960-2 Walker Road, Windsor, ON N9A 6J3. **When ordering a subscription, please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions**. Basic annual subscription price: $52 for 47 issues. Back issues $4 prepaid ($6 foreign) from: The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper.

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begun to see the clique around Abbas and Dahlan as sellouts, all too eager to accommodate US and Israeli wishes. But the bloodshed has infuriated the population, and many are now disgusted with both Fatah and Hamas.

What to do? First, it's high time to cast aside illusions. We cannot accept Hamas's ideology, and we reject the idea that "Islam is the solution" to political problems (the common formulation of Hamas and other Muslim Brotherhood–affiliated movements). But the United States and Israel must finally acknowledge that Hamas is a popular movement with deep roots in Palestinian society, and for that reason should be engaged rather than ignored. A key function of diplomacy, after all, is to negotiate with one's enemies; there would be little need for it if all nations and political groups were on friendly terms. It is commonly argued that negotiations are impossible because Hamas will not recognize Israel and is bent on its destruction. But Hamas leaders have repeatedly stated that they can live with a two-state settlement, or at the very least a long-term *hudna* (truce). Both Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniya and his political adviser, Ahmed Yousef, have made this point in op-eds in the past month.

Yet Washington has quickly accepted Abbas's constitutionally illegitimate formation of a new emergency government. Further, it has promised to release massive amounts of aid and is reportedly pushing Israel to dismantle checkpoints on the West Bank and release prisoners, in this way hoping to facilitate a successful "Fatahland" on the West Bank that the Palestinians will compare favorably with a quarantined and boycotted "Hamastan" in Gaza. Israel should certainly ease pressure on Palestinians and turn over tax revenue owed them, and foreign aid is desperately needed. But any scheme to promote a more permanent division between the West Bank and Gaza, or to perpetuate Hamas's diplomatic isolation, is bound to increase tensions. And it can hardly bring about a viable peace agreement; arbitrary exclusion of a major, democratically elected Palestinian constituency in favor of malleable figures with little popular backing is doomed to fail.

A more realistic policy, for Israel as well as the United States, would start with the assumption that only negotiations with a unified, more or less representative Palestinian leadership can lead to long-term resolution of the conflict. And there is a framework for such a settlement: the Arab League peace proposal, which offers full peace for full Israeli withdrawal from the territories. The promise to ease conditions in the West Bank should be matched with urgently needed aid to Gaza and an end to closure of the commercial exits there. Dismantling checkpoints, transferring tax revenues and releasing prisoners should be accompanied not by attempting to sow divisions among Palestinians but by encouraging a unified new leadership. Without such a leadership, negotiations are impossible. And with no hope for negotiations and an end to occupation, the misery and rage in the territories will only continue to fester. It has been said in recent years that the rise of Hamas would make Israel and the United States rue the day they dismissed Arafat. Let's hope further disintegration doesn't make them rue the day they dismissed Hamas.

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COMMENT

In Praise of Red Tape

Is there any figure in American political discourse more reviled than the bureaucrat? Say the word and a potent caricature leaps to mind: the petty and shiftless paper pusher who wields his small amount of power with malice and caprice. Whatever the issue—from school reform to overhauling the nation's intelligence apparatus—the bureaucrat is on the wrong side of it.

It's slander with a long pedigree—Cicero called the bureaucrat "the most despicable" of men, "petty, dull, almost witless…a holder of little authority in which he delights, as a boy delights in possessing a vicious dog"—but in the last forty years, conservatives have converted this casual contempt into an ideological fixture. Since as far back as the Goldwater campaign, the American right has generally found that "the government" is too abstract an entity for most people to actively loathe. It's far more effective to demonize the people who execute its daily functions. Bureaucrats are to conservatives what the bourgeoisie was to Marx: an oppressive class of joyless knaves. Milton Friedman quipped that "hell hath no fury like a bureaucrat scorned"; Ronald Reagan said in 1966 that "the best minds are not in government" because if any were, "business would hire them away"; and George Wallace expressed his desire to "take those bearded bureaucrats" in Washington who were in the process of desegregating the South, "and throw them in the Potomac."

But a funny thing has happened over the past six years. At a time when the press failed to check a reactionary Administration, when the opposition party all too often chose timidity, it was the lowly and anonymous bureaucrats, clad in rumpled suits, ID badges dangling from their necks, who, in their own quiet, behind-the-scenes way, took to the ramparts to defend the integrity of the American system of government.

It was the midlevel intelligence professionals in the CIA whose expertise led them to argue that Iraq had no means of acquiring nuclear material; it was the planners and country experts at the State Department who prepared a 1,200-page document about postwar Iraq outlining in depressing detail the many challenges and brutalizing exigencies our occupying forces now face. It was professional scientists in the bowels of the Environmental Protection Agency who pushed their reports warning of the effects of climate change, only to have them censored and purged. It was concerned and conscientious spooks and cryptographers at the National Security Agency who contacted reporters to raise alarms about the warrantless wiretapping of Americans. It was a midlevel career bureaucrat at the Department of Education named Jon Oberg who spent his own time—nights and weekends—studying the student loan program and discovered that taxpayers were being ripped off by private lenders to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Despite warnings from his (appointed) superiors, he published his results in an internal memo sent to the entire department. He retired shortly thereafter.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of the virtue of bureaucracy came during the recent revelations of James Comey's late-night confrontation with the President's henchmen in the hospital room of the drugged and groggy Attorney General John Ashcroft. True, Comey and Ashcroft were both appointed apparatchiks, but ones who acted, for this moment, like bureaucrats, responsible to the integrity of their office and the rules and processes by which those offices were governed. And they were no doubt pressured by the fact that many of the career civil servants in the Justice Department had reportedly vowed to quit if the wiretapping program in question was approved.

But one could easily imagine the Comey story slightly altered to bolster the Goldwater-Reagan-Bush II worldview. Imagine that Jack Bauer, hero of television's *24*, has a suspect ready to confess to the location of a ticking bomb but runs up against a maddening bureaucratic regulation that prevents him from employing the necessary interrogation techniques until the obstructionist, stickler-for-the-rules Attorney General signs off. But the pathetic AG has fallen ill, and is in the hospital, drugged, which means Bauer has to waste precious time while he waits for some of the President's associates to visit the stricken AG and get the needed signature. When they arrive, however, they realize they're too late: they've been beaten to the punch by a quisling bureaucrat who's persuaded the Attorney General not to sign off, because Bauer's tactics would be "illegal."

After all, what could be a more absurd example of mindless red tape than a midnight drive to a hospital to obtain...a supervisor's signature? But the moral of the Comey story specifically, and of the failures of the Bush Administration more broadly, is the sublime value of bureaucracy. Not only is governance of any kind impossible without it; so too are the checks and balances of a constitutional republic. Red tape is what binds those in power to the mast of the law, what stands in the way of government by whim. That's why an Administration hostile to any checks and balances has sought to reconstitute the federal civil service as just another lever in its machine.

As hard as Rove & Co. have tried to remake the bureaucracy in their own partisan image, though, their changes have been by and large cosmetic. Like teachers at a high school who watch classes of students come and go, the bureaucrats remain while the administrations change. When the current occupant of the White House leaves, his appointed hacks will leave with him, and whether or not someone actually committed to governing takes his place, the bureaucrats will be there, as always, to do their duty.

CHRISTOPHER HAYES

Christopher Hayes is a Puffin Foundation Writing Fellow at The Nation Institute.

Revolution in Venezuela?

Hugo Chávez has committed a grave error in closing down the opposition TV station, which has been on the air a half-century. Like it or not, this was not a frontal attack on the economic elite but rather a blow to the cultural identity of millions of Venezuelans—and it will have severe consequences for the government. Trying to replace popular soap

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COMMENT

operas and game shows watched by the poor with pathetic "revolutionary" programming is as bad as leaving them without food.

What Chávez has got wrong is his belief that he has made a revolution when in fact he's simply won some elections. And even those victories are more attributable to an arrogant, bejeweled opposition that lacks mass adherents than to Chávez. This has allowed Chávez to dominate some state institutions and to change some of the rules of the game, but it doesn't give him the leverage needed to impose the sort of drastic ideological sea change he clearly intends.

In Venezuela there has been no revolutionary rupture, as there was in Cuba and Nicaragua, two countries where there was no democratic history. In Cuba the change was violent and encompassing; all of the institutions were recast. And to date there is no real Cuban opposition—nor are there real elections, freedom of the press or private property. In Nicaragua the change was equally violent, and though mistreated, the institutions of press freedom, political opposition, elections and private property all survived.

Venezuela might be experiencing a period of extreme polarization and social conflict, but that is not a revolution. In revolutionary times, violence becomes prevalent, first in the form of rebellion and later in the form of counterrevolution. So far in Venezuela, political violence has been more verbal than material.

Forty years of peaceful transitions of government power created a democratic culture among Venezuelans that has, fortunately until now, made violence unnecessary. The rule of law might be weak, but there is nevertheless the rule of law. The mistake made by the opposition in the attempted coup of 2002 was precisely to undervalue this democratic tradition. Overthrowing governments is no easy task, nor is peacefully modifying the basic pillars on which they are built. A revolutionary rupture creates a situation of great social exaltation that—for better and worse—opens up spaces to change many things, including prevailing ideologies and cultural traditions. But short of revolution, these things are difficult to change.

Anticapitalist revolutions are fueled more by dictatorships than by poverty. In Venezuela there was no dictatorship, and poverty was not key to Chávez's ascent. Every revolution imposes austerity, and this is something to which Venezuelans on the right and left remain immune. Venezuela is not an industrial capitalist state but rather one of export and consumerism. Chávez is strengthening the economic role of the state, redistributing oil income and forming new economic elites, all mixed with doses of populism, corruption and business opportunities. All this is new—but it is not revolution and it is not socialism.

Chávez lacks a revolutionary party and instead depends on a fragmented political structure rife with different ideologies. To his right is the military, to his left some intellectuals and below him a politically diverse base. Converting this into a unified party would mean butting heads with a lot of local bosses who like to disagree. Chavismo has accomplished something important by giving power and identity to thousands of Venezuelans who had been marginalized, but it is not cohesive, either ideologically or historically. Rather, it is held together by petrodollars.

Nor does Chávez have a revolutionary army. On the contrary, the army has defeated him twice (1992 and 2002). The complicity of the army with Chávez today rests solely on weapons purchases, and that is much more about corruption than about preparing for war. It's exactly this sort of privileged corruption that closes the path to authentic revolutionary change. The Venezuelan military will neither kill nor die for Hugo Chávez.

Fidel Castro survived all the many attempts on his life. Daniel Ortega led a successful insurrection in Nicaragua and Evo Morales made a swift transition from the barricades to the presidency of Bolivia. Chávez, by contrast, sells oil to the Americans; on two occasions he surrendered to his enemies with no fight; and he currently sleeps with an enemy army. This pushes him to engage in public provocations in order to burnish his revolutionary credentials, as he has by insulting George W. Bush. Attacks strengthen Chávez. Tolerance weakens him. Chávez needs external enemies to help him hide the corruption of his own functionaries, the incompetence of his government, the division among his supporters and the lack of security in the streets of Caracas.

With his latest acts Chávez has turned the process of accumulation of forces against himself and has suddenly revitalized a demoralized opposition. Maybe he will be able to make some more changes in Venezuela. But he will never be able to get rid of elections. And as long as there are elections, there will be no permanent majorities, no fraud so great as to be insurmountable, no set of alliances that are eternal. Oil money can help Chávez do many things—but it will never be enough to buy himself a revolution.

JOAQUÍN VILLALOBOS

Joaquín Villalobos, top commander and strategist of the leftist FMLN in El Salvador, was a principal in the 1992 peace accords. This essay originally appeared in the Madrid daily El País. *Translated by Marc Cooper.*

CALVIN TRILLIN

On the Tributes to Scooter Libby That So Underwhelmed the Judge

The jury found that he had flat-out lied.
Before the judge's sentence was applied,
Supporters of poor Scooter were awhirl.
So Kissinger and Wolfowitz and Perle
Wrote letters, as did other grand highfliers:
Support of lying from some famous liars.

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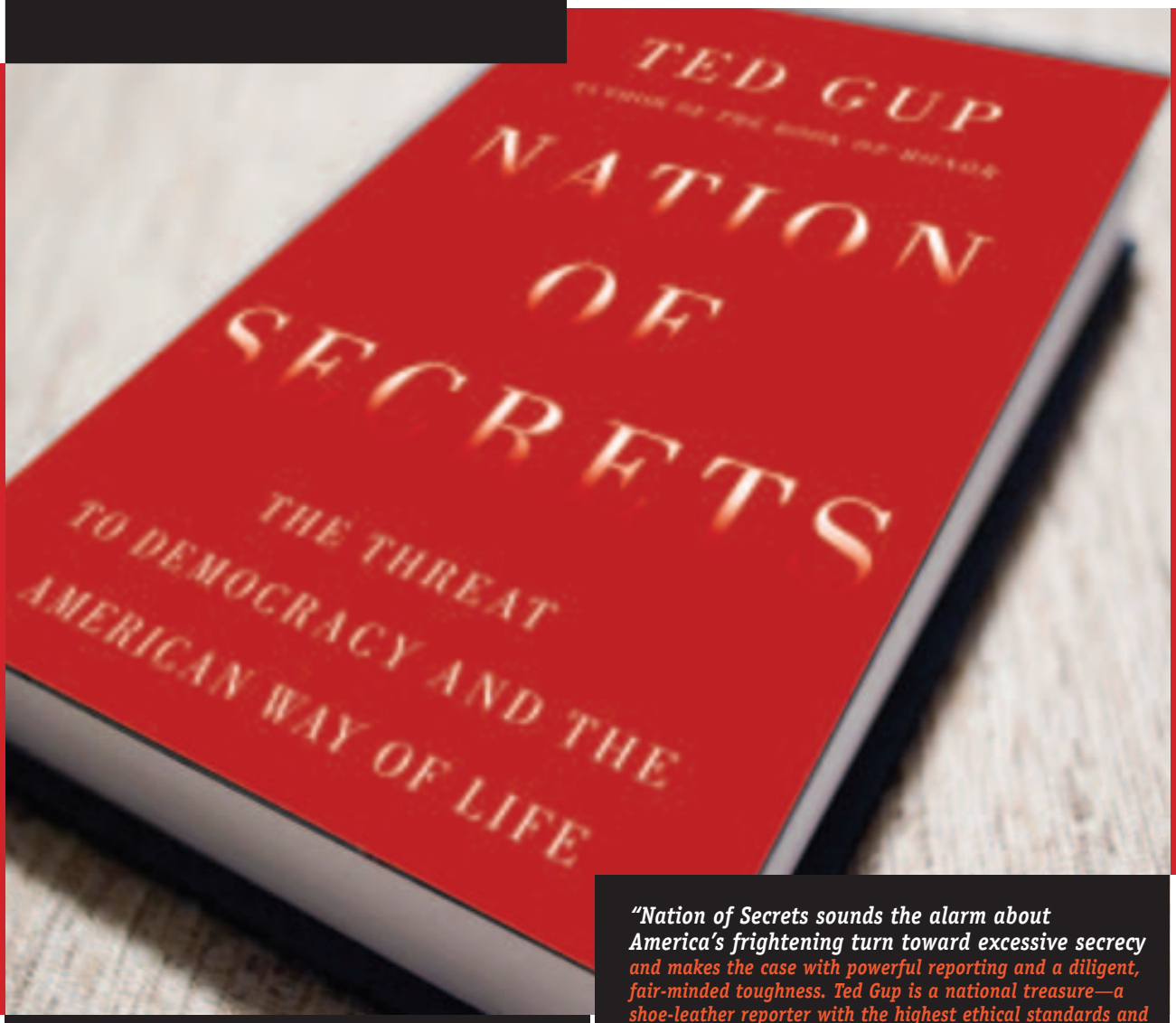

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–Alex Jones, Director, Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

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–Steven Aftergood, Project on Government Secrecy, Federation of American Scientists

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COMMENT

A New Green Card Deal

The Senate immigration bill faces opposition from conservatives and liberals alike, but critics on both sides are missing a crucial problem with the legislation. The bill fails to address a fundamental flaw in our current immigration system: the arbitrary and unfair manner in which it restricts the number of green cards issued each year.

In addition to placing an annual limit on the number of green cards, the current system imposes a uniform per-country cap. Most countries never come close to reaching their limit, which is 25,620—or 7 percent of all family and employer-sponsored visas. But four countries persistently max out their caps: Mexico, India, the Philippines and China. For these countries the visa backlog for some family categories is twenty or more years—an impossible wait. For employer-sponsored visas the backlog for skilled workers is five or more years.

The cap on annual admissions from these countries is a major cause of illegal immigration and the deficit of skilled immigrant labor. The Senate proposal skirts the problem but cynically addresses its effects by increasing the number of green cards only for those with education and wealth while channeling lower-skilled immigrants into a guest-worker program.

Congress repealed the noxious national-origin quota system, in place since the 1920s, which blatantly discriminated against immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe and Asia on grounds that they were racially undesirable. Individual attributes—family relations and job skills—were deemed more important in selecting immigrants than national origin or race. The per-country cap was established to keep the immigration stream diverse, to keep the system from being monopolized by a few countries. The logic appealed to Americans' sense of fairness, that we should treat each country the same.

But this sense of formal equality obscures the fact that not all countries are the same: Some are larger and some smaller, some are more prosperous than others, some have special historical relationships with the United States that others do not. The one-size-fits-all approach doesn't make sense in the real world. Why should Belgium and New Zealand, say, have the same number of visas as Mexico and India, if the former are underused and the latter are oversubscribed?

In the early 1960s Michigan's Democratic Senator Philip Hart proposed an innovative bill that did not treat immigration as a zero-sum game but took into account both America's needs and the needs of sending countries. Hart's initial vision allocated 20 percent of all visas to refugees; 32 percent to countries in proportion to their size of population; and 48 percent to countries in proportion to their immigration to the United States during the previous fifteen years. It set a minimum and maximum for all countries and called for an update every five years. It was a complicated formula that eschewed a unilateralist approach in favor of one that balanced human rights, the emigration needs of sending countries, and Americans' historical and familial ties abroad. The bill had bipartisan support but was bypassed by another bill, supported by the Kennedy Administration. That bill was ultimately signed into law as the Hart-Celler Act by President Johnson in 1965.

Hart's ideas could be updated to solve the problems caused by the per-country limits in ways that don't denigrate family ties or create an underclass of temporary guest workers. Since 1980 we've had a separate law dealing with refugee admissions. But we could allocate green cards to countries based on the relative size of their population and emigration demand; their ties to American citizens and institutions; and their supply of low- and high-skilled labor that we need. In other words, if we acknowledge that migration is driven by supply and demand and take into account the needs of the United States and other countries, we might have a system that is more realistic and fair.

We might also return to a regionalist approach. Few people know that before 1965 there were no numerical restrictions on immigration from countries of the Western Hemisphere, in keeping with the tradition of Pan-Americanism. When we imposed quotas on Mexico and the rest of the Americas after 1965, we got illegal immigration. Today the free-trade agreements in the Americas (NAFTA and CAFTA) ease the movement of goods and investments—especially those of multinational corporations—but not people. The European Union, by contrast, allows citizens of member states free movement to other member states. If we combined measures to strengthen the economies of our hemispheric neighbors with a more sensible immigration policy, we would go a long way toward solving the illegal immigration problem.

Finally, rather than rehash the agonizing debate over a mass-legalization program every twenty years, we might consider restoring statutes of limitations on prosecuting unauthorized presence. We used to have such a policy (one to five years) before Congress eliminated it in the 1920s. The underlying logic was much the same as the arguments for legalization today: Immigrants who work hard and sink roots in their communities effectively become part of our society and should not have to remain in the shadows forever.

We would be wise to rethink the unilateralist premises of US immigration policy. It makes much more sense for our policies to reflect how migration is driven by supply and demand in a world in which population and wealth are distributed unevenly. History shows that policies designed to categorically exclude—from the Chinese exclusion acts of the nineteenth century to the imposition of unrealistically low quotas on Mexico in the twentieth—are doomed to failure.

MAE M. NGAI

Mae M. Ngai, professor of history at Columbia University, is the author of Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America.

ON THE WEB

§ NY State of Mind: Katrina vanden Heuvel on New Yorkers running for President.

§ What America Owes Its Illegals: Barbara Ehrenreich argues that they should be rewarded, not penalized.

§ Wall Street, Iraq and the Declining Dollar: Ken Miller gives an investment banker's view of the war's impact.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Zyklon B on the US Border

Zyklon B arrived in El Paso in the 1920s courtesy of the US government. In 1929, for example, a Public Health Service officer, J.R. Hurley, ordered $25 worth of the material—hydrocyanic acid in pellet form—as a fumigating agent for use at the El Paso delousing station, where Mexicans crossed the border from Juárez. Zyklon, developed by Degesch (short for the German vermin-combating corporation), was made in varying strengths, with Zyklon C, D and E representing gradations in potency and price. As Raul Hilberg describes it in *The Destruction of the European Jews*, "strength E was required for the eradication of specially resistant vermin, such as cockroaches, or for gassings in wooden barracks. The 'normal' preparation, D, was used to exterminate lice, mice, or rats in large, well-built structures containing furniture. Human organisms in gas chambers were killed with Zyklon B." In 1929 Degesch divided the Zyklon market with an American corporation, Cyanamid, so Hurley likely got his shipment from the latter.

As David Dorado Romo describes it in his marvelous *Ringside Seat to a Revolution: An Underground History of El Paso and Juárez: 1893–1923* (Cinco Puntos Press, El Paso), Zyklon B became available in the United States when, in the early 1920s, fears of alien infection were being inflamed by the alarums of the eugenicists, most of them political "progressives." In 1917 Congress passed, and President Wilson—an ardent eugenicist and pro-sterilizer—signed, the Immigration Act. The Public Health Service simultaneously published its *Manual for the Physical Inspection of Aliens*.

The manual had its list of excludables from the US of A, a ripe representation of the obsessions of the eugenicists: "imbeciles, idiots, feeble-minded persons, persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority [homosexuals], vagrants, physical defectives… anarchists, persons afflicted with loathsome or dangerous contagious diseases…all aliens over 16 who cannot read." In that same year Public Health Service agents "bathed and deloused" 127,123 Mexicans at the bridge between Juárez and El Paso.

The mayor of El Paso at the time, Tom Lea Sr., represented, in Romo's words, "the new type of Anglo politician in the 'Progressive Era.'" For Lea, "progressive" meant a Giuliani-style cleanup of the city. He had a visceral fear of contamination and, so his son later disclosed, wore silk underwear because his friend, one Doc Kluttz, had told him typhus lice don't stick to silk. His loins thus protected, Lea battered the US government with demands for a quarantine camp on the border where the Feds could protect El Paso from typhus by holding all immigrants for fourteen days. Health officer B.J. Lloyd thought this outlandish, telling the surgeon general that typhus fever "is not now and probably never will be, a serious menace to our civilian population."

Lea sent his health cops into the city's Mexican quarter, forcing inhabitants suspected of harboring lice to take kerosene and vinegar baths and have their heads shaved and clothes incinerated. After barging into 5,000 rooms, inspectors found only two cases of typhus, one of rheumatism, one of TB and one of chicken pox.

Though Lloyd opposed a quarantine, he did urge delousing for "all the dirty, lousy people coming into this country from Mexico." His facility was ready for business just as the Immigration Act became law. Soon Mexicans were being stripped and daubed with kerosene, their clothes fumigated with gasoline, kerosene, sodium cyanide, cyanogens, sulfuric acid and Zyklon B. The *El Paso Herald* wrote respectfully in 1920, "Hydrocyanic acid gas, the most poisonous known, more deadly even than that used on the battlefields of Europe, is employed in the fumigation process."

The delousing operations provoked fury and resistance among Mexicans still boiling with indignation after a lethal gasoline blaze in the city jail some months earlier. As part of Mayor Lea's city-wide disinfection campaign, prisoners' clothes were dumped in a bath filled with a mixture of gasoline, creosote and formaldehyde. Then the prisoners were forced, naked, into a second bath filled with "a bucket of gasoline, a bucket of coal oil and a bucket of vinegar." On the afternoon of March 5, 1916, someone struck a match. The jail went up like a torch. The *Herald* reported that about fifty "naked prisoners from whose bodies the fumes of gasoline were arising" caught fire. Twenty-seven died. In late January 1917, 200 Mexican women rebelled at the border, prompting a riot and putting to flight police and troops on both sides.

Now, Zyklon B is fatal when absorbed through the skin in concentrations of more than fifty parts per million. How many Mexicans, many crossing daily, suffered agonies or died after putting on those poisoned garments? Through oral histories, Romo has documented cancers, birth defects and deaths that he estimates could go into the tens of thousands and yet, as he told a reporter, "This is a huge black hole in history."

The use of Zyklon B on the US-Mexico border was a matter of interest to the firm of Degesch. In 1938 Dr. Gerhard Peters wrote an article in a German pest science journal, *Anzeiger für Schädlingskunde*, which called for its use in German *Desinfektionskammern* and featured photos of El Paso's delousing chambers. Peters went on to become the managing director of Degesch, which supplied Zyklon B to the Nazi death camps. He was tried and convicted at Nuremberg. (In 1955, he was retried and found not guilty.)

In the United States, the eugenicists rolled on to their great triumph, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, much admired by Hitler, which would doom millions in Europe to their final rendezvous with Zyklon B twenty years later. By the late 1940s, the eugenicists were mostly discredited, but the Restriction Act, that monument to racism, bad science and do-gooders, stayed on the books unchanged for forty years.

In 1918 disease did leap across the El Paso border. Romo quotes a letter from Dr. John Tappan, who had disinfected thousands of Mexicans. "10,000 cases in El Paso and the Mexicans died like sheep. Whole families were exterminated." This was "Spanish" flu, which originated in Haskell County, Kansas. ■

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KATHA POLLITT

Anything Boys Can Do…

I thought I would hate *The Dangerous Book for Boys*, the publishing sensation by British brothers Conn and Hal Iggulden. Actually, it's irresistible, beginning with the cannily designed red-and-gilt, raised-letter cover reminiscent of Edwardian children's literature. A grab bag of militantly old-fashioned pastimes, skills and informational tidbits, it has brief chapters on how to skip stones, play stickball and make a pinhole projector, plus smatterings of nature lore, history, geography and culture (accounts of famous battles, all safely in the past; "Latin Phrases Every Boy Should Know"). Morse code! Star maps! Invisible ink made of pee! Captain Scott! Grammar! Remember grammar? There are three whole chapters on it. Neat! I have no idea if today's boys would rather identify trees or read about Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain than play Resident Evil 4 or download pornography, but it's a safe bet their parents wish they did. In fact, it's a safe bet parents would like to do some of this stuff themselves—teach a dog tricks, make a battery, read about the Wright brothers. Cool! Children's books are bought by parents—and grandparents, even better for the Iggulden' purposes, because you'd have to be nearly 60 to have grown up with the cultural references and worldview resuscitated here. In light of all this, it's no wonder *The Dangerous Book for Boys* was a huge success in Britain, sits atop the Amazon charts and is piled three feet deep at my local Barnes & Noble.

The Dangerous Book speaks to widespread fears that the fun's gone out of childhood—that kids are (take your pick) alienated from nature, cosseted by "helicopter parents," bombarded with media vulgarity or, thanks to their dumbed-down educations, ignorant and bored. There's a sense that we're seeing the permanent disruption of a long chain of cultural transmission, whether it's knowing how to make things—anything—by hand or knowing who won the Battle of Waterloo and what the subjunctive is. I'm old enough to have read as a child every one of the "Seven Poems Every Boy Should Know" ("Ozymandias," "Invictus," "Sea-Fever" et al.), and with the exception of Sir Henry Newbolt's "Vitae Lampada," which equates giving your all at cricket with invading the Sudan ("Play up! play up! and play the game!"), I wish kids read them still. I don't even object to the page listing the Ten Commandments, a blatant pander to the Christian-homeschool market—didn't I read somewhere that the majority of people who want the Ten Commandments displayed in the courtroom can name only three or four of them? Even bigots should know what they're talking about.

But as the title makes plain, there is a gender agenda here. *The Dangerous Book*, like Dennis the Menace's treehouse—did I mention there's a chapter on how to build one?—is strictly no girls allowed. Girls are all very well in their way—there's even a chapter on the need to "respect" them, bring them flowers and send them anonymous valentines—but like Dennis's Margaret, they're life's wet blankets. Curiosity and courage, the Igguldens' touchstones of masculinity, are not for girls—and neither, presumably, are the rules of poker or the making of fireproof cloth.

"Men and boys today are the same as they always were, and interested in the same things," the Igguldens write. Really? Like, um, the rules of grammar? In interviews they've put forward the view, popular on the right, that boyhood has been squashed by female teachers, political correctness and the nanny state. But what about girls? Girls today skip stones. They play poker. They love secret codes—in fact, they always did. They're just as curious about the constellations as their brothers are, if they're lucky enough to live where they can see them. Given how much energy the marketplace spends trying to channel girls' imaginations into princess fantasies and assorted bits of pink plastic junk, it's rather amazing that this is true. But it is. Boys may not read books with female protagonists—they may not read at all—but girls will read about boys, which explains the success of *Harry Potter*. Why must getting boys into the fresh air (or *The Lord of the Rings*) depend on confining girls to sugar and spice? (Two British women writers are working on *The Great Big Glorious Book for Girls*, a wimpy imitation that features baking and a jumping game with the suggestive name of French elastics. Sigh.)

It's not just the old-fashioned cover that marks *The Dangerous Book* as a throwback. Take the militaristic nostalgia (even for the imperialist Battle of Rorke's Drift against the Zulus, and the pointless slaughter of Balaclava and the Somme). When I raised this issue in a radio debate on NPR's *On Point*, Conn Iggulden suggested that battles appealed to boys longing to test themselves—but why *these* battles, and why (Greece and Rome excepted) always told from the Anglo side? I'm sure the Alamo looks rather different to the young Luises and Jesuses of our increasingly multiethnic America. Beyond that, is anyone served when heroism is united with war as an ideal for the young? What about the courage of standing up for justice? Of defying the majority? Of doing what's right? Rosa Parks was courageous. Frederick Douglass was courageous. In fact, black history is full of heroes, but people of color barely appear in *The Dangerous Book*. Maybe the Igguldens think black boys don't need a book like this—they're already dangerous.

It's not doing boys any favors to resuscitate the Anglo-imperial white manly ideal, given that Britain and America are becoming multiracial and multicultural societies in which women play bigger and more varied roles with every passing year. Playing up and playing the game, moreover, brought both nations the fiasco in Iraq. But then, as the British tend to forget, Captain Scott—brave, but ill prepared and amateurish and hampered by exactly the simplistic public-schoolboy mores promoted here—was a failure too. It was the clever, careful, modest Norwegian Amundsen who got to the South Pole first and lived to tell the tale. Maybe life isn't like a game of cricket after all.

Still, I'm keeping my copy. Someday I may want to make a paper hat, or learn some coin tricks or even just find out what all those gadgets on my Swiss army knife are for. ■

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ARTICLES

WILL THE PROGRESSIVE MAJORITY EMERGE?

RICK PERLSTEIN

For as long as I can remember, there's been a generally accepted story about the recent history of Democratic Party fortunes, a neat little morality tale that goes something like this: The New Deal majority fell apart when the party was taken over by forces outside the mainstream of American life. Getting blindsided by Reaganism was the party's just deserts. And if Democrats wanted the country back, they would just have to learn to become mainstream again.

For as long as I can remember, liberals have been complaining about awkward, self-conscious attempts to recover this "mainstream" sensibility and how they have paradoxically weakened the party. They forced Democratic politicians to become obsessed with polls. That, in turn, boxed Democrats into an identity the public—the mainstream—found the most off-putting of all: Democrats became timid. They couldn't pursue a bold public agenda because they were too hemmed in by polls. Very recently, among progressives, a new dictum has emerged: Hug close to the polls, worship the polls, *be* the polls.

Trends in Political Values and Core Attitudes: 1987–2007, a massive twenty-year roundup of public opinion from the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, tells the story. Is it the responsibility of government to care for those who can't take care of themselves? In 1994, the year conservative Republicans captured Congress, 57 percent of those polled thought so. Now, says Pew, it's 69 percent. (Even 58 percent of Republicans agree. Would that some of them were in Congress.) The proportion of Americans who believe government should guarantee every citizen enough to eat and a place to sleep is 69 percent, too—the highest since 1991. Even 69 percent of self-identified Republicans—and 75 percent of small-business owners!—favor raising the minimum wage by more than $2.

The Pew study was not just asking about do-good, something-for-nothing abstractions. It asked about trade-offs. A majority, 54 percent, think "government should help the needy even if it means greater debt" (it was only 41 percent in 1994). Two-thirds want the government to guarantee health insurance for all citizens. Even among those who otherwise say they would prefer a smaller government, it's 57 percent—the same as the percentage of Americans making more than $75,000 a year who believe "labor unions are necessary to protect the working person."

It's not just Pew. In the authoritative National Election Studies (NES) survey, more than twice as many Americans want "government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending" as want fewer services "in order to reduce spending." According to Gallup, a majority say they generally side with labor in disputes and only 34 percent with companies; 53 percent think unions help the economy and only 36 percent think they hurt. A 2005 NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll found that 53 percent of Americans thought the Bush tax cuts were "NOT WORTH IT because they have increased the deficit and caused cuts in government programs." CNN/Opinion Research Corp. found that only 25 percent want to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned; NPR/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard found the public rejecting government-funded abstinence-only sex education in favor of "more comprehensive sex education programs that include information on how to obtain and use condoms and other contraceptives" by 67 percent to 30 percent. Public Agenda/*Foreign Affairs* discovered that 67 percent of Americans favor "diplomatic and economic efforts over military efforts in fighting terrorism."

Want hot-button issues? The public is in love with rehabilitation over incarceration for youth offenders. Zogby/National council on Crime and Delinquency found that 89 percent think it reduces crime and 80 percent that it saves money over the long run. "Amnesty"? Sixty-two percent told CBS/*New York Times* surveyors that undocumented immigrants should be allowed to "keep their jobs and eventually apply for legal status." And the gap between the clichés about what Americans believe about gun control and what they actually believe is startling: NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* found 58 percent favoring "tougher gun control laws," and Annenberg found that only 10 percent want laws controlling firearms to be less strict, a finding reproduced by the NES survey in 2004 and Gallup in 2006.

You suspected it all along. Now it just might be true: Most Americans think like you. Nearly two-thirds think corporate

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profits are too high (30 percent, Pew notes, "completely agree with this statement…the highest percentage expressing complete agreement with this statement in 20 years"). Almost three-quarters think "it's really true that the rich just get richer while the poor get poorer," eight points more than thought so in 2002.

If only there was an American political party that unwaveringly reflected these views, as a matter of bone-deep identity. You might think it would do pretty well. Which leads to the aspect of the Pew study that got the most ink: "Political Landscape More Favorable to Democrats," as the subtitle put it. When you compare Americans who either identify themselves as Democrats or say they lean toward the Democrats with Republicans and Republican leaners, our side wins by fifteen points, 50 percent to 35, the most by far in twenty years. As recently as 2002 it was a tie, 43 to 43.

Plunge below the surface, however, and this stirring tale becomes disconcerting. Yes, again and again, the views of independents track the views of Democrats—more so, in fact, with every passing year. Pew says it's "striking" that 57 percent of independents think government should aid more needy people even at the price of higher debt. In 1994 it was only 39 percent. When asked their opinion of statements like "Business corporations make too much profit," independents answer the same way as Democrats: about 70 percent agree. On questions like "Are you satisfied with the way things are going for you financially?" the chart is amazing: Republicans, independents and Democrats clustered together at 65 and 64 percent in 1994. But Republicans have increasingly answered that question in the affirmative—81 percent in 2007. Meanwhile, the lines for independents and Democrats headed down, down, down, nearly in lockstep, to 54 percent today.

Pew says independents are thinking like Democrats, and that fewer and fewer want much to do with the Republican Party. In 1994 independents gave the GOP a 68 percent approval rating; now only 40 percent do. And the percentage of people who call themselves Republicans has dropped from 29 percent in 2005 to 25 percent today. But these people are not signing up as Democrats. The proportion of those who call themselves Democrats has held steady, in the lower 30s.

Here's a riddle: What's an "independent"? More and more, it's an American who holds positions we associate with Democrats but who refuses to call himself by the name. Why? Part of the reason is that people say to themselves, "If only there was a party that thought like me—that was for harnessing the power of government to help the needy and protect the middle class; for reining in business excess; for fighting overseas threats through soft power instead of reckless force." But they don't find today's Democrats answering to the description. A *Washington Post*/ABC News poll published in early June proved it on Iraq: It heralded the emergence of what might be called "antiwar independents," who'd like nothing more than to find a party determined to end the war but don't see enough difference between Congressional Republicans and Democrats for the latter to earn their loyalty. Fueled, the *Post* suspects, by the failure of Congress to change course in Iraq, independents gave Congressional Democrats a 49 percent approval rating in April but only 37 percent in June.

The pattern—Democrats losing because they don't look enough like Democrats—is nothing new: During the 2002 election Democrats did such a poor job of selling themselves as better protectors of middle-class interests that Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research found only 34 percent of voters saw a difference between Democrats and Republicans on prescription drug benefits to seniors. That year, when the party was handed a once-in-a-generation shot to prove itself as a protector against runaway greed (the corporate accounting scandals), DNC chair Terry McAuliffe called the swindling firm Global Crossing a "great company."

Democratic leaders have repeatedly squandered the opportunities presented by the increasingly liberal sympathies of voters.

I suspect there's another reason, however, one much more easily fixed. There is a famous Washington story, perhaps apocryphal, about jovial, "all politics is local" Tip O'Neill. After his first run for local office, O'Neill was gabbing with a neighbor, perhaps someone he grew up with, with whose family his was entirely interlaced in that Boston, Irish Catholic way. He asked if she had voted for him. She answered, "No." Shocked, Tip demanded to know why. "Because you never asked," she replied.

Democrats make a similar mistake these days: They rarely ask the public to vote for them *as Democrats*. The trend was obvious by the 2006 season, for those who cared to see: The same Pew numbers that now show a 50–35 Democratic/Democratic-leaners advantage over Republicans had the advantage at 47–38 in 2006. Candidates would have earned a premium just slapping the label "Democrat" on their TV ads, but most didn't do it. That fall writers and readers of the website MyDD.com ran an ad watch. Some Democratic commercials failed to mention any of the issues. Bush's war was a disaster; Bush's government was a crony-infested sinkhole; under Bush, the middle class was having a hard time—these would have been immense burdens for GOP candidates. Other ads, though, were even more frustrating: They mentioned those issues—but never used the label "Democrat."

It could have been a virtuous circle, a matchless teachable moment: Voter identification with the positions articulated could have translated into a party identification that independents hadn't been inclined to feel before—a crucial party-building function. But that's just not how the Democratic consultancy class thinks. Their habits were set when they were blindsided by the Reagan presidency and the rise of popular conservatism ("It helped convince me that the national Democratic Party drag was such that good candidates were carrying an albatross around their necks with the words DEMOCRATIC PARTY written on it when they went into elections," Will Marshall of the Democratic Leadership Council once said). Democratic leaders, scarred by the 1980s and frozen in the strategies of the 1990s, have repeatedly squandered the opportunities presented by the increasingly liberal sympathies of voters.

Rick Perlstein, the author of Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*, is writing a book about Richard Nixon.*

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Of course, slapping a graphic reading "Democrat for Congress" on ads or reforming the vague shame some powerful Washington Dems feel toward their party—or even turning Democratic Congress members overnight into tough advocates for bringing the troops home from Iraq—may not be enough to bring election day tallies in line with the party's fifteen-point advantage in lean and identification. It's a problem with many moving parts. The stubborn oxen on TV and in the establishment media who tell the American people how to think are part of the problem too.

The commentariat tells itself a little fairy tale. As a new report from the Campaign for America's Future (my employer, though I'm solely responsible for the ideas in this essay) and Media Matters for America points out (*The Progressive Majority: Why a Conservative America Is a Myth*), when the GOP took over Congress in 1994, the *New York Times* front page claimed, "The country has unmistakably moved to the right." It hadn't; for an excellent study showing this wasn't so, see Ronald Rapoport and Walter Stone's *Three's a Crowd*, which shows how Newt Gingrich's Contract With America was tailored as an appeal to Perot voters, then retroactively spun as a mandate for conservatism. Ten years later, when Bush beat Kerry by three points, Katie Couric asked on *Today*, "Does this election indicate that this country has become much more socially conservative?" It was a rhetorical question, for the establishment had set the conclusion in stone long before. Three weeks before the 2006 election Candy Crowley of CNN said Democrats were "on the losing side of the values debate, the defense debate and, oh yes, the guns debate." After election day, Bob Schieffer of CBS said, "The Democrats' victory was built on the back of more centrist candidates seizing Republican-leaning districts." (Tell that to my favorite Democratic House pickup, Carol Shea-Porter, a former social worker who won a New Hampshire seat after getting kicked out of a 2005 presidential appearance for wearing a T-shirt reading TURN YOUR BACK ON BUSH.) John Harris of the *Washington Post*, now of *The Politico*, said, "This is basically not a liberal country." Concludes the Media Matters/Campaign for America's Future report, "Democratic victories are understood as a product of the Democrats moving to the right, while Republican victories are the product of a conservative electorate."

The stubborn oxen on TV and in the establishment media who tell the American people how to think are part of the problem too.

The media have always been this stubborn, even when the conclusions they reached were 180 degrees reversed. In 1964, after Lyndon Johnson swamped Barry Goldwater, pundits said conservatism was dead as a force in American politics, and continued in that arrogant vein for years, ignoring plentiful evidence of the conservative upsurge. They were no less empirically impaired after they were shocked into making the pivot, and they won't turn again until they're forced, kicking and screaming, when the evidence finally becomes overwhelming and undeniable.

An important corollary of the media fairy tale is that the Democrats can't embody the will of the people. As an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* explained in 2004, Kerry lost because of his party's "God gap." Once more, the data won't cooperate: A declining constituency—the devout—is treated as if it were booming. Pew shows that the number of people who "completely agree" that "prayer is an important part of my daily life" is down six points in the past four years. The number who "never doubt the existence of God" is down eight over the same period. The Barna Group likewise reports, "There has been a 92% increase in the number of unchurched Americans in the last thirteen years"—a population of 75 million, which is growing: According to the Pew report, "This change appears to be generational in nature, with each new generation displaying lower levels of religious commitment than the preceding one." America, of course, is a religious country—but 19 percent born after 1976 are either atheists, agnostics or claim no religion, compared with 5 percent born before 1946. Yes, social conservatives are a loud component of our body politic. But the numbers peaked long ago. Pew measures social attitudes via six questions, such as whether schools should have the right to fire gay teachers and whether AIDS is God's punishment for sexual immorality. In 1989 about half of respondents answered at least four of those six questions conservatively. Now, a mere 30 percent do.

Just who are these iniquitous citizens? People who identify themselves as secular or unidentified with a religious tradition represent about 5 percent of Republicans and 11 percent of Democrats. They are a downright heathenish 17 percent of independents. The Pew report has a chart of three descending trend lines of those who answer the social-values questions conservatively. The line for independents is less socially conservative than for Democrats. DLC types love to talk about "swing voters," a group often taken to largely overlap with "independents." Say party centrists, they just don't trust the Democrats—that "God gap." So Democratic candidates are supposed to wear their piety on their sleeve if they ever hope to creep over 51 percent in an election. The centrists are wrong. Independents are the most secular portion of the electorate.

Of course, the media business also has interests. Those interests happen to coincide with those in our party—the Democratic Leadership Council is the most notorious—who have been fighting since the 1980s to make the party more friendly to corporations. The two ostensibly nonconservative cable news channels look more and more like loss leaders for giant corporations eager to signal to other giant corporations that they won't do anything to harm them. There is little other rational explanation for why a network like CNN Headline News keeps on a spittle-flecked right-wing ranter like Glenn Beck (he got less than 60,000 viewers in the 25–54 demographic one recent Tuesday); or in a gentler, more culturally mediated way, why cable news gravitates toward ostensibly nonconservative commentary that posits an ineluctable social conservatism of the electorate as the reason the GOP is the country's natural governing party.

We may not be able to get the media to understand that this is the most favorable climate for liberalism in a generation. But I do know a class of people we might have a better chance of influencing: Democratic politicians—especially Democratic presidential candidates. But what I'd like to say is a paradox, given what I've been arguing above: Don't pay too much attention to polls, no matter how favorable they may be

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Q and A with Ralph Nader and Liza Featherstone

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to the kind of politics you'd like to see. Not just because it keeps you from leading but because it can keep you from winning.

More and more I find myself telling a story I consider the key to understanding modern American political history: that of Ronald Reagan's 1966 California gubernatorial campaign. His expensive, top-drawer consultants had hired a company formed by psychology PhDs who promised that Reagan's would be the first campaign run "as a problem in human behavior." Many liberal interpreters of Reagan's career have pointed to this to suggest that he was plastic, or a pawn, or a manipulator of voters. Not so. In fact, he was the opposite. One of the first things he did was tell all these fancy pollsters to shut up. In his early, exploratory campaigning, he'd been attacking the insolence of insurgent Berkeley students—who "should have been taken by the scruff of the neck and thrown out of the university once and for all." His consultants told him to knock it off, pointing to their data: Berkeley didn't even show up as an issue. Reagan threw the polls back in their faces: "Look, I don't care if I'm in the mountains, the desert, the biggest cities of the state, the first question is: 'What are you going to do about Berkeley?' And each time the question itself would get applause."

Reagan followed his heart, of course, made Berkeley his signature issue and thumped Edmund Brown in one of the greatest upsets in modern political history (even though the establishment media hated his conservatism then more than they hate our liberalism now, and even though Republican elites were more unmistakably ashamed of the GOP "brand" than DLCers are of the Democratic one now). The technical lesson in this story is that longitudinal polls like Pew's are inherently incomplete. They derive their value from asking exactly the same questions over time, even though the banquet of issues people care about always changes. A politician who goes into battle believing polls can teach him "the issues" is fighting in a static world, which is not the world we live in.

But the more profound lesson is that the greatest politicians create their own issues, ones that no one knew existed. Was the mood in California favorable for Reagan's conservative message in 1966? Obviously, or else Reagan wouldn't have won; he wasn't a magician. But he was—yes—a great communicator, confident of his gifts. By listening and interacting with ordinary people, and sniffing out where his own sense of right and wrong dovetailed with what he heard, he divined a certain inchoate mood. It had to do both with a fear of breakdown of the social order and resentment of liberal elites. Finding those frequencies sounding via the trope of "Berkeley," he was able to turn that mood into a political appeal. In that regard, his pollsters could only hurt him. All they knew was that Berkeley wasn't an "issue."

That's the danger of even the best polling: its power to smother intuitive leaders in the cradle. The Pew poll and all the others can only *point* to the modern electorate's anxieties—anxieties that have something to do with a sense of breakdown in the economic order, and with resentment of conservative elites. But what story can Democratic politicians weave to repair them? None that they are telling yet. All I know is that to sound the right frequencies, we need candidates who know when to tell their pollsters to stuff it. ■

FOR NEW YORK CITY CHANCELLOR JOEL KLEIN, CORPORATE REFORMS TRUMP DEMOCRACY.

School's Out

LYNNELL HANCOCK

A knot of parents and teachers—some clutching children, others clutching protest fliers—huddled outside Hostos Community College one frosty evening last February. The forty or so Bronx residents had crisscrossed the borough for the rare chance to mix it up with the New York City schools chancellor in a public forum.

JANNA BROWER

A guard met them at the door. No more room, he said, leaving the agitated parents, quite literally, out in the cold. They had hoped to hear Joel Klein explain why he was scrambling the school system's signals for the second time in five years. Inside the Grand Concourse annex, Klein was winding down his pitch to the hundred or so in the audience who had made the cut. "We are enacting these reforms so we can make sure whatever your skin color, wherever you live, your kid will get the education he needs and deserves," Klein shouted into the microphone.

Klein may have appeared an awkward headmaster in his Wall Street suit, but he was on familiar terrain, wrapping his arguments for corporate-style school overhaul in the ethos of civil rights. He is driven by the noble pledge to "finish the job that *Brown v. Board of Education* began." His path to racial equity, however, employs the efficient tools of business—top-down decisions, marketplace incentives and a belief in private sector solutions to public school problems. Instruction is "data driven." Academic results are "granular." It is a technocratic vision of education, in sync with big-moneyed foundations, at odds with most classroom teachers and many parents.

In the calculus of the moment, each of the city's 1,450 schools is considered an independent franchise. Like a bank outlet or a RadioShack store, any given school is a "key unit" in Klein's new Department of Education. Schools are headed by branch managers, or principals, whose jobs have been reconfigured as CEOs

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rather than as educators. Principals are expected to contract out for nearly every core service, from testing to professional development to their own support team. Quarterly returns flow out in the form of tests four times a year. Schools must compete with one another, at their peril. The lowest performers on the bell curve may be sanctioned or shut down.

Thomas Sobol, the former New York State education commissioner, believes the battle lines have been drawn between democracy and corporatization. "The arrogance, my God, of saying because we know how to run Kmart, we know how to educate children," said Sobol, professor emeritus at Columbia University's Teachers College. "It represents a giant defeat of democracy."

In Klein's view, "corporatization" and "privatization" are meaningless phrases used to detract from the real revolution underfoot. "There is nothing less public about public schools," he insisted during a recent interview at Department of Education headquarters. His reforms are about strengthening the top in order to bring equity to the bottom. A lone public employee, Klein has nearly unfettered control of 1.1 million schoolchildren and a $15.4 billion budget. "In the end it is my responsibility to say, I think this is the right policy," Klein said. "I need to be prepared to make the tough service delivery decision. The mayor holds me accountable, and the city holds the mayor accountable. We should not have 'shared decision-making.' That's what marks all unsuccessful school reforms."

A lot is riding on Klein's record—including the political future of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, which may include an independent run for President. He was the first mayor in thirty-three years to be authorized by the State Legislature to directly pick his own chancellor and who has wagered his mayoralty on the fortunes of the city's schools. Urban school systems across the nation are watching the radical overhaul in New York City. If the plan succeeds, it will mean a triumph for advocates of mayoral school takeovers and a boon for the new breed of CEO superintendents committed to business solutions for public schools. Mayoral control has already taken hold in Chicago, Boston, Cleveland and, most recently, Washington—whose mayor replaced the school superintendent, at Klein's recommendation, with 37-year-old education entrepreneur Michelle Rhee.

If Klein's plan falters in New York, many will argue that the demise was made inevitable by keeping teachers, parents and communities at a yardstick's distance. No matter how competent and committed the players at the top, public-sector reforms on this imposing scale may be doomed if the people most affected are left outside.

It certainly felt that way at the Hostos forum, where a faint chant filtered through the closed windows into the room: "Let the parents in!" As irony would have it, Klein's Bronx appearance was part of a five-borough mission to persuade the masses that the mayor's latest structural overhaul was the best thing for every child. The Bronx parents inside weren't buying it. "No science. No history. Only tests," one mother bellowed, shaking her finger at the chancellor. Applause thundered across the linoleum. "Welcome to the boogie-down," another mother said, followed by more hoots and hollers. "We're real here." She then criticized a recent citywide busing fiasco that left one of the

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chancellor's corporate consultants $16 million richer and scores of children wondering how they would get to school.

Finally, a statuesque woman from the South Bronx took the microphone, choking back nerves. "I saw a guidance counselor pulling a kindergarten child across the floor like an animal," began Rosa Villafane tentatively. "The principal won't do anything. She's an empowerment principal," Villafane said, referring to one of the chancellor's key reforms that offers the city's principals greater authority to make decisions in exchange for more accountability. "If she won't listen, where do I go?"

The chancellor had a standard reply for her, the one he employed after nearly every appeal that night: "E-mail me," he said. "I'm accountable." He did not follow up the offer with his e-mail address. He then slumped into his chair, chin in hand, looking as if he wanted very much to be somewhere else.

A Harvard-trained litigator and former deputy White House counsel to President Clinton, Klein is many things, but he is not a man to boogie-down in the Bronx. Raised in a working-class family in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, Klein graduated from William Bryant High School in Queens, class of '63. That's where his connections to most children in New York's schools end. After graduating from law school in 1971 and launching his own DC law firm, he served as an assistant attorney general with the Justice Department, where he prosecuted the government's antitrust case against Microsoft. His most recent job was as CEO of the German-owned global media giant Bertelsmann.

It's an unlikely résumé for the head of the nation's largest public school system, but one with obvious appeal to the then–Republican mayor. Bloomberg had begun the systemwide makeover before Klein arrived by putting up a FOR SALE sign on the Soviet-style Board of Education headquarters at 110 Livingston Street in Brooklyn, an address synonymous with bloated bureaucracy. Redubbed the Department of Education, it moved its offices into the elegantly appointed Tweed Courthouse in the shadow of City Hall. Old faces were replaced, while old ways of doing business were rapidly brought under tight, centralized control.

As soon as Klein took over, he hired private consultants and installed a cabinet of mostly noneducators making six-figure salaries. Fresh young principals with minimal experience were brought in from outside New York to replace the large number of those who left or were forced out. The thirty-two old school districts were scrapped and refitted into ten regions. New Yorkers tend to love rat-a-tat changes. Few mourned the loss of a bureaucracy everyone had derided. "I thought mayoral control was a good idea at first," said Noreen Connell, head of Education Priorities Panel, a research and advocacy group. "It was good when they broke through the facilities funding logjam."

Klein and Bloomberg worked in tandem to cash in their corporate and celebrity connections, hauling in piles of money and a star-studded cast. Caroline Kennedy was hired at a dollar a year to attract philanthropy money into the administration. Former General Electric chair Jack Welch was brought onto the advisory board of the $70 million principal's academy to train the new managers. Klein's former adversary Bill Gates ponied up $51 million in 2003 to help create small schools. Gates's foundation would later increase its investment to more than $100 million. Next came "managed instruction," as Klein would call it, with standardized math and reading curriculum, and the promise to create fifty charters and 150 small schools.

But it became painfully clear early on that the public would have little to no role in the rapid changes in the classroom. Bloomberg entered the re-election season in 2004 taking on the politically irresistible problem of "social promotion"—the practice of moving kids up through the grades whether or not they had learned much. He tested third graders (later adding fourth and seventh graders) and held them back if they didn't make the grade. The approach went before the new Panel for Educational Policy, a thirteen-member appointed board that had replaced the old seven-member Board of Education. Two Bloomberg appointees and a Staten Island borough president appointee were set to join the five parent members to vote against the measure. The mayor swept in and replaced all three renegades on the eve of the vote, a move the tabloids dubbed the "Monday Night Massacre." Klein still counts "ending social promotion" as one of his administration's accomplishments, citing increased numbers of score-based promotions as evidence.

Contracting Out

New Yorkers still seeking solutions to the woes of public schools were sorely tested on a bitter cold day in midwinter. On January 29 yellow school buses barreled out of their garages onto new, reconfigured routes. No trial runs. Within hours, hollers could be heard from eastern Queens to the North Bronx. Children as young as 5 were cut off from their usual bus routes and issued subway MetroCards. Others were left waiting on cold street corners for an hour or more, arriving late to school. Some children were sent across hectic Francis Lewis Boulevard in Queens to catch their bus.

"No New York adult would cross Francis Lewis Boulevard," said Betsy Gotbaum, the city's public advocate. "They certainly wouldn't send *their* children across it."

The chaos was caused in large part by the financial consulting firm Alvarez & Marsal, an outfit the department hired without competitive bidding at $16 million to find $200 million from the department's budget to divert directly into the schools. Its first order of business was to streamline the city's school bus routes. The net savings for all this grief: $5 million, far less than what was originally estimated.

The head of an independent citywide parent group said the parents had warned officials about the impending debacle two months earlier. "They ignored us, as usual," said Tim Johnson, chair of the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council.

That debacle spotlighted a flurry of outside contracts signed by this administration, many of them without competitive bids. City comptroller William Thompson Jr. was alarmed to find that the Alvarez & Marsal contract allowed one consultant to charge the city as much as $450 an hour. A subsequent investigation found that Klein's office had signed an estimated $270 million in outside no-bid contracts after Klein took the reins; several contracts had serious problems. Platform Learning, for example, was hired for $7.6 million to tutor city school kids over a five-year period. After three years, Platform had earned more than

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$62 million, nine times its contracted amount, with two years remaining.

"There is no accountability, no oversight, no transparency in this administration," Gotbaum said. "New Yorkers deserve better." The chancellor claimed that $250 million had been redirected into the classroom. Thompson's office could find only $140 million in savings, and no evidence that any of it had ended up in schools. "At a time when Tweed is demanding more accountability from our superintendents, our principals and our teachers," Thompson said, "we are demanding accountability from *them*."

The chancellor disputes his critics, saying his administration provides more information and transparency than any in the past. Still, the busing crisis crystallized into public disenchantment with many of the vaunted reforms.

Size Matters

One of the most promising reforms was the creation of new, small high schools. New York already was home to one of the first small-school movements in the nation, promising democratic, grassroots antidotes to large, factory-size institutions. So it was fitting, even thrilling, when the new chancellor embraced small schools as a linchpin of his revitalization plans. Variety and innovation were encouraged.

But in a short time, critics say, the Department of Education turned the mission on its head. An astonishing 200 schools were launched in five years, with more than $100 million in funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Some of them are, without question, excellent environments. Overall, however, the movement has become a mass production of top-down, privately subsidized schools, said Michelle Fine, a City University of New York education professor, that have little to do with their social justice–minded ancestors. Quality has been sacrificed for speed.

To counter these charges, the administration cites comparisons between the small schools and the large ones they replaced. For example, the large South Bronx High School had a 48 percent graduation rate in 2001; five years later, three small schools that replaced it averaged an 83 percent graduation rate. Evander Childs High School in the Bronx graduated just 31 percent of its students in 2002, compared with 93 percent in 2006 for Bronx Aerospace, a small Junior ROTC replacement school.

But these small schools were admitting students who were more likely to succeed, according to a survey of the first fifteen small schools conducted by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). Their entering ninth graders had higher state test scores than those at large schools. The schools also had far fewer special-education students and non-English speakers and in some cases more money per student. The union found that Bronx Aerospace had half the number of special-education kids, nearly four times fewer English-language learners and spent about $5,000 more per pupil than its host school, Evander Childs.

Moreover, a recent study by the New York Immigration Coalition and Advocates for Children found that non-English speakers are not given "full and equitable access" to the small schools. Small schools were allowed to exempt special-education and English-language learners from their first two start-up years. New incentives are in place to help the small schools serve a fraction of these high-needs kids. But large concentrations of these two populations have been shuffled into the remaining large, ill-equipped high schools. The Citywide Council on High Schools has filed a discrimination case with the US Education Department's Office of Civil Rights.

In the end, the small-school initiative exhibited the contradictions of this administration. "They are mass-producing unique schools," said Leo Casey, a top UFT official, "and destroying them in the bargain."

Totalitarian Testing

Nothing has more impact on education than attempts to measure it. Generally, educators believe teacher-generated assessments work best as an organic part of classroom curriculum. CEOs believe company-produced tests administered on a centralized schedule create a more equitable education. "Data collection is part of instruction," Klein told the City Council education committee last January, when questioned on the hours of instruction time lost to test preparation and paperwork (up to two days a week, according to a 2005 UFT teacher survey).

Klein's metaphors tell their own story. The chancellor sometimes refers to children as cars in a shop, a collection of malfunctions to be adjusted. Teachers need to "look under the hood," he says, to figure out the origins of the pings. The diagnostic information is then made available in pie charts and color bar graphs, child by child, as the year rolls along.

"You get granular information this way about a child's strengths and weaknesses," said James Liebman, Klein's chief accountability officer and a Columbia University civil rights law professor. "And you get instant return on the data. We are providing a lot more tools to give teachers the capacity to look at a child and see what they are doing."

The 2001 federal No Child Left Behind Act emphasizes state standardized tests to measure each child's level of proficiency. The city's system ratchets up that process, measuring each child's growth from one year to the next rather than his or her ability to hit or miss a single standards target. In may be fairer to use multiple instruments, but it requires millions of dollars and an army of additional tests.

Liebman has designed "progress reports," issuing a grade of A through F for each school in areas of environment, performance and progress—with 85 percent of this information deriving from state standardized tests. "Quality reviews" are conducted yearly by a team of evaluators hired by a British company, Cambridge Education, which charges $16 million a year. The team visits schools to see how well they are using all the data to improve learning. A new "robust" IBM data-management system called ARIS will keep track of every grain of information collected on each child. Cost: $80 million.

The most controversial policy is something called periodic assessments, popular with business models. These are standardized tests, on top of the once-a-year state tests, given to kids every few weeks for additional feedback. The administration had already signed up Princeton Review (owned by Bertelsmann) as part of its $21 million contract to administer math and reading tests for grades three through eight, three times a year. That commitment was scrapped. CTB/McGraw-Hill was hired as a replacement, for $80 million over five years. Starting this fall, the

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tests will be ramped up to five times a year. High school students will be added to the cycle four times a year. In June Klein appointed Harvard economist Roland Fryer as the department's "chief equality officer." Fryer's main proposal offers cash payouts to students for perfect scores on the McGraw-Hill tests—$25 to fourth graders and $50 to seventh graders. Principals who agree to this experiment will receive $5,000 for their schools.

Statistical disputes aside, the basic disagreement is over what constitutes an educated child. Is it someone who can demonstrate "grains" of isolated skills or someone who has the capacity to think and explore with a sense of wonder and depth? So far, the grains have the upper hand. "This administration is preparing children to do these small tasks, stripping education down to its parched bones," said Tom Sobol. "The soul of education is left at the door."

The public is losing faith in the New York schools revolution. In March a Quinnipiac University opinion poll found that 58 percent of those surveyed longed for an independent elected board at the helm rather than the mayor. Klein's surprise announcement of a new overhaul last winter—a sort of decentralization in drag, with tighter control at the top over more empowered principals at the bottom—triggered even more outrage. "There is no evidence that your first reforms improved kids' learning," chided a visibly peeved City Council education chair Robert Jackson in January.

The truth is, the evidence is mixed at best. Klein points to improved academic achievement, higher graduation rates and a greater number of high-quality school choices since the mayor took over in 2002. He claims that 60 percent of ninth graders graduated four years later in 2006, an 18 percent hike. During the same period, math scores rose 20 percentage points, meaning that 57 percent of students in third through eighth grades met or exceeded standards. Reading scores rose 10 percent, to 51 percent. This spring an eight-point hike in math scores across the grades, to 65 percent, meeting standards, and a 5 point rise in reading scores, to 42 percent for eighth graders, was cause for celebration—even though reading scores for third and fourth graders dropped an average of four points.

But the numbers are hotly contested. Diane Ravitch, a former education official in the George Bush Sr. White House, questions why the chancellor counts 2002 as his starting point, when the initiatives did not kick in until January 2003. Test scores can be volatile instruments. The recent eighth-grade reading scores were up all across New York State this year by eight points, from 49 to 57 percent, an indication that the test itself was likely easier. The graduation rate is another bugaboo: The state calculates a 50 percent graduation rate for the city (not 60 percent), because it figures GEDs, English-language learners and special-education diplomas differently from the city. Overall, the radical overhaul seems to have produced modest improvement rather than landmark progress. "Their gains are respectable, not historic," Ravitch told a packed crowd at St. John's University last March.

Perhaps the most notable development has been the mobilization of opponents from among disparate city groups. An overflow crowd of 1,000 angry New Yorkers descended on Manhattan's St. Vartan's Cathedral in late February to protest the latest round of changes. It was a rare coalition of forces, angry enough to set

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aside their individual agendas to unite against the Department of Education. Here were City Council members, elected officials, activist groups like ACORN, the Working Families Party, labor unions, an immigrant coalition and citywide parent groups.

The most powerful group, and the one that gave this assembly its institutional clout, was the UFT, which has more than 100,000 members. Its legendary statewide political power was forged in the 1960s by black and Latino community groups battling for control of the schools. In recent years the union had made peace with its past, creating real ties to parent groups. In many ways Klein and Bloomberg helped create this assembly by cutting off channels once used routinely by the too-powerful union to influence policy. The effect was to alienate both teachers and parents, pushing them together. "No administration has been as hostile to the union as this one," said the UFT's Casey.

The mayor's response to this historic show of unity has been to dismiss it as a small collection of parents influenced by powerful self-interested groups. But he may be ignoring this group of pols and parents at his peril. Rumblings that February night at Hostos called for an end to mayoral control. The measure is up for renewal by the New York State Legislature in 2009.

Few New Yorkers have any appetite for returning to the old school board days. But most would like to see some democratic checks and balances built into what has become a two-man show. An independent elected board could oversee budget, contracts and policy decisions, and the selection of future chancellors. The input of seasoned educators is needed again at the highest decision-making levels. Regional boards could help return a sense of community to the city's schools. At the classroom level, school-based teams of teachers and parents should be given some real clout. As for testing, department officials would do well to emulate the Republican state of Nebraska, which has invested in teacher-created assessments (now threatened by new legislation) that do not choke curriculums.

Americans tend to hold only a few big ideas sacred. One of them is the promise that its unique public school system can offer every child a crack at the American dream. Ironically, the top-down corporate solutions popular with CEO superintendents like Klein wrest control from the people they claim to serve. "Public schools are the cornerstone of our democracy," said Irving Hamer Jr., Manhattan representative on the last Board of Education. "If we let them quietly slip through the public's hands, we are breaking the covenant of civic participation in this country." ■

THE SMACKDOWN ON CRITICS OF BEIJING THAT MANY WORRIED ABOUT HAS NOT OCCURRED.

Hong Kong, Ten Years After

FIONA NG

By official count, more than 450 celebratory events have been scheduled, wall-to-wall from April to December this year, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from British to Chinese rule. The exact date is July 1, also the climax of the celebrations, when the pandas Le Le and Ying Ying will make their official debut at Ocean Park Hong Kong. On that day there will be two parades, several Chinese opera performances, a soccer match and a ceremony in which Chinese President Hu Jintao will swear in Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen and his administration for a new five-year term. That night there will be the requisite fireworks, as there have been every year for the past decade, over Victoria Harbor.

JANNA BROWER

In the first ten years of the "One Country, Two Systems" experiment, Hong Kong has seen enormous changes. In that short span the city has soldiered through the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, the era of "negative assets" early in the new millennium, the bird flu scare of 2002 and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) of 2003, before launching into an economic renaissance that, increasingly and inextricably, is tied to that of mainland China. Bilateral trade between the two economies reached $166 billion in 2006, up from $113 billion in 2004.

Ten years ago the fear was that civil liberties would erode under Chinese rule, despite the promise that the political and social system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region would be preserved for fifty years after the changeover (as the common, translation-resistant parlance put it, "horse racing will continue, dancing will continue"). The city's last British governor, Chris Patten, made it his mission to implant democracy in the electoral process; by 1995 all sixty seats of Hong Kong's Legislative Council were chosen through fully democratic election. In that historic poll "pan-democrats"—the term commonly used to designate the various democratic parties—won nineteen seats, more than any other party. The plan was that the duly elected legislature would continue its term through the handover. But even before the ballots were cast, Beijing declared it would dissolve the lawmaking body, dismantle the electoral structure and install a provisional legislature chosen by a Beijing-appointed committee.

Full democracy is still unrealized. At the same time, the kind of Tiananmen Square–style smackdown on critics of Beijing that many worried about has not happened. Law Yuk Kai, director of Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor, argues that there are subtler cues to China's influence in the city. For example,

Fiona Ng, a freelance writer living in Los Angeles, is a frequent traveler to Asia who has lived and worked in Hong Kong.

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the Standing Committee of Beijing's National People's Congress has the right to interpret Hong Kong's Basic Law (its Constitution, in effect), and its decision takes precedence over the Court of Final Appeal (CFA), Hong Kong's highest court.

One such interpretation, in 1999, involved the residency rights of children born outside Hong Kong to parents with legal residency, including children born out of wedlock. The ruling had significant ramifications for the city. Increased business ties mean that more and more Hong Kong residents have been traveling to China to work. A substantial number of businessmen have begun to keep mainland mistresses, who, as of the mid-1990s, had given birth to more than 300,000 children.

The CFA ruled that these children (both legitimate and illegitimate) should have the legal right to live in Hong Kong. Projecting that the verdict could open the city to an influx of 1.67 million migrants, the government decided to ask the Standing Committee to interpret the article concerning the right of abode in the Basic Law. The committee put a limit on the number of children who can enter the city. It was an emotional, divisive issue—and one indication of the difference between democratic politicians and human rights campaigners, on the one hand, and many, if not most, Hong Kong residents. While the democrats argued that Beijing's reinterpretation should be dismissed, the city's residents were supportive of the cap, given their fear that a flood of Chinese migrants would drain the city's welfare system.

Law said the move was tantamount to an invitation for China to interfere in Hong Kong's affairs. "Many of the city's important decisions have to go through China. China has to be blamed for these interventions and, in a way, for not keeping their hands off Hong Kong elections and other things," he said. "I think it's important to look at how much room exists for civil society and political dissent.... Basically, the freedom of association, assembly and expression are largely intact for most people. But if you look more closely, you can tell that there are real threats to selected people and organizations." Law cited unjust police treatment of the Falun Gong as an example.

This invisible pressure applies also to the local media. Law mentioned a February survey, conducted by the Hong Kong Journalists Association, which found that 58 percent of journalists believe press freedom has declined since the handover, singling out self-censorship as the greatest problem.

But the citizens of Hong Kong have not been passive observers of these changes. On July 1, 2003, 500,000 took to the streets to protest high unemployment; the failure of the city's first Chief Executive, Tung Chee-wah, to revive the post-SARS economy; and, most of all, Article 23, an antisubversion bill that, if passed, could have rolled back freedom of speech in the city. In the face of that unprecedented show of people power, the government backed off and scrapped the proposal. In its wake came the resignation of three cabinet members. Feeling the heat, Tung stepped down in 2005, two years before the end of his second term.

Legislator Emily Lau Wai-hing said the eruption of public participation has come to define the decade. "Before the change of sovereignty, there weren't so many demonstrations. Now we have five or six a day." Lau, a founder of the hard-line demo-

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cratic Frontier Party, said, "People are becoming more used to demonstrating, becoming more vocal. I think the rise of civil society is mainly due to the people's deep dissatisfaction with the policies of the administration."

The city was witness to another political first in 2007—and whether it was a triumph or a smokescreen very much depends on who you talk to. The March 25 Chief Executive (CE) election was the first to feature a qualified candidate from the democratic camp, legislator and barrister Alan Leong Kah Kit (to qualify, a candidate must receive at least 100 nominations from the 800-member Election Committee, which is made up mostly of Beijing-government supporters and members of the business community). His opponent, incumbent Donald Tsang, won by a landslide, as expected. But Leong, who expressed interest in running in the next CE election, in 2012, said, "We are not in it to really win this rigged election.… I am in it to hopefully put in place a system that would allow Hong Kong people a real decision on who gets the job next time."

Michael DeGolyer, director of the Hong Kong Transition Project, an academic think tank, said this year's CE election was a watershed not so much for the city as for its democratic activists. In running Leong, "for the first time, the democrats were making a serious effort to play within the rules that now exist," DeGolyer said, alluding to the camp's boycott of the 1996 and 2002 CE election.

The democratic camp's most contentious boycott came in 2005, when it rejected a modest electoral reform package put forward by Tsang. The democrats wanted nothing short of direct election in 2012, and would consider voting for the proposal only if all District Council seats (the lowest rung of government) were immediately opened to direct election. That didn't happen. Despite criticisms that the reform package was merely cosmetic, many political analysts believed that the proposal did represent a step, however tiny, toward democracy. As such, many blamed the democrats for blowing a chance at reform.

"I don't think it was a mistake—[the reform] wasn't enough," said Emily Lau, arguably the most vocal critic of the Beijing government. Also, Tsang "did not invite people to talk to him and say, 'Let's do some bargaining, some give and take.' He just threw [the proposal] out there and said, 'Hey, take it or leave it.'"

The city waits with bated breath for Tsang's release of a new electoral reform proposal this summer. Pan-democrats stand by their target year of 2012. And the Core Group, a newly established think tank, is pushing for CE election by universal suffrage in 2012 and a fully elected Legislative Council by 2016 at the latest. On the other hand, Ma Lik, chairman of the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong, the city's biggest pro-Beijing political party, said in a May press conference that Hong Kong citizens will not be ready to have the right to vote until 2022—twenty-five years into the One Country, Two Systems promise. Ma also said Hong Kong teachers should not characterize the 1989 Tiananmen Square events as a massacre.

Word is that Tsang's upcoming package will present three categories of proposals toward electoral reform. DeGolyer, who believes that something very close to the pan-democrats' wish will be on offer, predicted that dialogue between the government and the democrats will finally begin. In 2005 "it didn't bring a fundamental change in strategy of the party involved. Now, however, we are seeing that the government no longer says, Take it or leave it, and the democrats no longer say, All or nothing," DeGolyer said. "I think people now are ready to make a deal." ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

Department is the same as that of other agencies under the Bush Administration: to privatize government functions. NCLB threatens both state and local control, as effective resources are replaced with materials from high-profit publishers and parents are encouraged to enroll their children in private schools subsidized by vouchers. CANDACE TOFT

Scotts Valley, Calif.

■ Whether the writers and supporters of this law realize it or not, its fundamental effect will be to further advance the growing trend toward a two-tier education system wherein affluent communities have good schools and poverty-prone areas do not. The more you observe the results of the law's application and the actions of the federal education officials, the more their underlying motive becomes obvious: Struggling schools are in worse shape, while affluent schools are in clover. HOWARD F. SOSBEE

La Honda, Calif.

■ NCLB does not reward excellence. It does not matter to NCLB how many children score above "proficient." It only matters how many are below. The result is that schools do not focus on the gifted children, who will become our future leaders. Their parents will then move their children to private schools and will probably support vouchers. That will leave behind the poor and the more challenged children. Then public education as we have known it will end. PETER BOHACEK

Sherrill, N.Y.

■ As I read Linda Darling-Hammond's article, it occurred to me in a nauseating flash that Bush's intent from the start has been merely exploitative. He doesn't care two pins about neglected kids; he cares about privatization. By setting unrealistic standards that don't take immigrant and learning-disabled students into consideration and then punishing schools with kids who fail to meet those standards, Bush is engaging in propaganda to drum up support for school vouchers. And conveniently, while he makes his case, his friends in the testing industry make a tidy profit and no doubt make generous contributions to his party. SANDY MILEY

Portland, Ore.

■ I work in the Reading First program. I can anonymously attest that it is the greatest attack on democracy imaginable. The programs are designed to take the teacher out of the equation. Teachers must spend a minimum of five years learning to deliver the program. Forget about discussing current events or introducing information that does not relate specifically to the anthology. Teachers learn that they must follow orders. If you point out that the program teaches incorrect information (like "more" is the superlative and "most" the comparative, as I noted) you will halt your ascent of the bureaucratic ladder.

Teachers soon begin to pass that message along to students: Don't think; just do what's in front of you. We don't need qualified teachers to implement these programs; we need unqualified teachers. There are two choices for educators like myself: Teach public school and teach the poor how to follow orders, or teach private school and teach the rich how to think for themselves. I can't say this publicly because I would lose my job. We all have to watch what we say. NAME WITHHELD

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Improbable Moralist

PHILLIP LOPATE

THE COLLECTED STORIES.
By Leonard Michaels.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 403 pp. $26.

SYLVIA.
By Leonard Michaels.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 129 pp. $13.

Leonard Michaels (1933–2003) was an original; everything he wrote, like it or not, came alive. His prose moved at a fast clip and paid readers the compliment of assuming they could match his mental velocity, with a concise, pungent and pyrotechnic style that tolerated no flab. It won him admirers as diverse as Susan Sontag, William Styron, Larry McMurtry and Charles Baxter—Michaels's reputation always stood higher with fellow writers than with the general public. One reason may have been his avoidance of make-nice redemptions and his insistence on hard truths (like the waiter in his delicatessen story who tells customers there's "no such thing" as lean pastrami). But it's also fair to say that his preoccupation with betrayals, sexual randiness and aggression could strike some readers as nasty, hard to take. There was another side of Michaels, tender, appreciative and compassionate, which gained strength as he grew older. The publication of his collected stories should win him many new fans, offering as it does ample proof that he was among the few essential American short story writers of the past half-century. His short roman à clef *Sylvia*, also reissued, about a hideous start-up bohemian marriage in Greenwich Village, is one of the most powerful pieces of autobiographical prose to have resulted from this age of the memoir.

Michaels burst on the scene in the '60s with the incendiary stories that were collected in his first book, self-deprecatingly titled *Going Places* (1969). Many of these stories followed the adventures of Phillip Liebowitz, a young man on the make, driven by envy and id, set loose in the mean streets and salons of Manhattan. Down below were "the bar fighters, the city's most deeply kicked, stabbed and slashed"; up above, in fancy Central Park West apartments, another kind of violence. In "The Captain," Liebowitz, desperate for employment, goes to a party and tries to butter up the hostess:

Leonard Michaels, circa 1980

"Do you really want the job, Mr. Liebowitz?"

I said, "Let's fuck."

She blinked and shook her head. She sighed.

I had been too quick, too smart. I shrugged like a man with nothing more to say, and looked across the room at them, sitting close together on a couch,

Phillip Lopate is the author of Waterfront: A Journey Around Manhattan *(Anchor) and editor of the anthology* American Film Critics: From the Silents Until Now *(Library of America).*

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talking. To express life's failure, I lifted a cigarette.

These stories satirize the bourgeois swingers who rationalize bad behavior with pronouncements like "I'll kill you. To me the connection between love and death is very close" or "I will say one thing, Cosmo, you meet people in an orgy." Again and again, Liebowitz finds himself having sex almost inadvertently with the hostess while her husband (sometimes his best friend) is banging on the door. The sex is usually compulsive and sprinkled with literary references: "I caught her hand, dragged her down like a subaqueous evil scaly. We kissed. She kissed me. I bit her ear. We kissed and there was no outside except for the phone ringing again. I let it. We had D.H. Lawrence, Norman Mailer, *triste*." The clipped sentences mock a hard-boiled persona: Philip Marlowe by way of that other Phillip, perennial English-lit doctoral candidate Liebowitz.

These early stories merge recognizable Gotham settings with Oedipal nightmare surrealism. A father bursts in on his daughter in bed with the naked Liebowitz, who scurries out onto the street without his clothes; there he is admonished by the elderly doorman for not being nice; he slips back to his girlfriend only to discover her father has had a massive heart attack and is in the hospital; she whispers, "Fuck me." The characters seem helpless, dread-filled, driven by blind appetite and impulse.

If these early stories resist garden-variety realism, the ones in Michaels's second book, *I Would Have Saved Them If I Could* (1975), go further in the direction of the postmodern: list-stories, parables, fragments, pastiches. The title story, for instance, is a brilliant collage of reflections on the author's immigrant family, Lord Byron, Karl Marx, Borges and the concentration camps. Right in the middle is a section titled "Black Bread, Butter, Onion," a sort of urban pastoral prose poem that conveys Michaels's talent for capturing the everyday while measuring the guilt-ridden distance his character has come from the Old World sufferings and sacrifices of his relatives:

> The black bread should be Pechter's, but the firm went out of business, so substitute bialys from the bakery on Grand Street, between Essex and Clinton, on the right heading toward the river, not Soho. With your thumb, gouge and tear bialys open along the circumference. Butter bialys. Insert onion slices. Do this about 3:00 a.m., at the glass-topped table in my parents' dining room, after a heavy date in Greenwich Village. My parents should be asleep in their bedroom, twenty feet away. Since my father is dead, imagine him. He snores. He cries out against murderous assailants. I could never catch his exact words. Think what scares you most, then eat, eat. The New York Times, purchased minutes ago at the kiosk in Sheridan Square, is fresh; it lies beside the plate of bialys. As you eat, you read. Light a cigarette. Coffee, in the gray pot, waits on the stove. Don't let it boil. Occasional street noises—sirens, cats—should penetrate the Venetian blinds and thick, deeply pleated drapes of the living-room windows. The tender, powdery surface of the bialys is dented by your fingertips, which bear odors of sex; also butter, onion, dough, tobacco, newsprint, and coffee. The whole city is in your nose, but go outside and eat the last bialy while strolling on Cherry Street. The neighborhood is Mafia-controlled; completely safe. You will be seen from tenement windows and recognized. Smoke another cigarette. Take your time. Your father cries out in his sleep, but he was born in Europe. For a native American kid, there is nothing to worry about. Even if you eat half a dozen bialys, with an onion and coffee, you will sleep like a baby.

In subsequent collections, such as *Shuffle* (1990) and *A Girl With a Monkey* (2000), Michaels would continue to juggle the roles of good son and bad boy. His superb list-story, "In the Fifties," records: "I knew card sharks and con men. I liked marginal types because they seemed original and aristocratic, living for an ideal or obliged to live it. Ordinary types seemed fundamentally unserious. These distinctions belong to a romantic fop." Meanwhile, "I was a teaching assistant in two English departments. I graded thousands of freshman themes.... I wrote edifying comments in the margins. Later I began to scribble 'Awkward' beside everything, even spelling errors."

"Are you experienced?" Jimi Hendrix demanded. Michaels came of age at a time when being experienced seemed to require forcing yourself to violate prudence and common sense: Like Norman Mailer's "White Negro" or Philip Roth at his raunchiest, or the filmmaker James Toback in *Fingers* and *The Gambler*, Michaels had a naïve craving to be "cool." But he always acknowledged self-mockingly the potential shallowness of such adventures. Is the nature of experience to sleep with as many women as possible, to gamble, to hang out with gangsters, kill a man, sell drugs? Or is it to learn to sit in one's room, calmly and contemplatively, as Pascal recommended?

Michaels took a teaching job in Berkeley, where he lived for the last decades of his life, save for a period near the end in Italy. As James Baldwin fled America for Paris to save himself from being eaten by rage, so Michaels abandoned New York, which he saw as a ruthless killer-city, for the milder climes of the Pacific. Reading *Sylvia*, that excruciating, harrowing account of his first, mutually punishing marriage to an emotionally disturbed woman who, when he finally decided to leave her, took revenge by committing suicide in his presence, you understand why he had to get away.

As Michaels entered middle age, his stories deepened and mellowed; he grew fonder of ordinary people, more stoically realistic. There was less evidence of a player's need to show off. Oh, occasionally he would relapse into razzle-dazzle sensationalism, as with the silly "Viva la Tropicana," where Jewish gangsters spray bullets and take Cuban mistresses. But overall, a solacing sadness replaced frantic hysteria. He began to look back at his youthful competitive angst with detachment, as in the story "Honeymoon":

> I felt envy, a primitive feeling. Also a sin.... According to Melanie Klein, envy is among the foundation stones of Brain House. Nobody is free of it. I believed envy is the chief principle of life: what one man has, another lacks. Sam is smart; hence, you are stupid. Joey is tall; hence, you are a midget. Kill Sam and Joey, you are smart and tall.

Ultimately, this social Darwinist outlook, bred in the Lower East Side ghetto of Michaels's youth, where bright Jewish boys vied like rival gang members for college scholarships and dates, had to give way. But not before it had propelled Michaels through a careening, womanizing existence; he married four times. He could be, as they say, "difficult." This may be the moment to admit that I knew Lenny and considered him a friend, though we rarely saw each other, living as we did on opposite coasts. He was a handsome, moody, casually erudite man who strutted (he loved Latin music, the sensual art of its dance movements) and brooded (he had a touch of the obsessive about him, and seemed to go around sniffing hostility in the air). On the other hand, he was one of the kindest, shrewdest men I've ever known. Wendy Lesser, who often published

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him in her *Threepenny Review*, has written a wonderful portrait of Lenny, loving yet clear-eyed, in her recent memoir *Room for Doubt*. She admits he had a temperamental, touchy side, but she also notes that he was enormously generous, especially toward younger writers, a rare trait in the literary world. Interestingly, Lesser says she prefers Michaels's essays to his stories. I would not go that far, though he was a marvelous essayist (Montaigne was his god). I will say he increasingly tried to complicate the frontier between fiction and nonfiction. He published diary extracts as short stories, fascinated with how the minimalist journal entry could bear the heart of a tale. As the guest editor of a special fiction issue of *Ploughshares*, he published my "Against Joie de Vivre," though I kept insisting it was a personal essay. Michaels had a broader, more inclusive idea of genre. He insisted on calling *Sylvia* first "a fictional memoir," then "a novel," though it was, from what I gather, entirely factual. In any case, I read it as a memoir.

One of the ways his own fiction-writing evolved in an essayistic direction was that he became increasingly receptive to aphorism, digressive reflection and throwaway wisdom. Nowhere was this shift to wisdom more pronounced than in his final, impressive suite, *The Nachman Stories*. These seven beautiful short stories, brought together for the first time in his posthumous collection, feature a protagonist-mathematician who lives a quiet life in California. We are explicitly told that Nachman "wasn't especially sensual," that his "need for ecstasy was abundantly satisfied" by working out mathematics problems and playing the violin, that he was "a strict observer of limits. He didn't fool around." In other words, he is not ruled by appetites—in some ways the opposite of Michaels's earlier alter ego, Phillip Liebowitz.

The tension in these last stories thus shifts from the consequences of acting out to those of restraint and right action. In one story, Nachman goes so far as to place his hand momentarily on the thigh of a Vietnamese haircutter for whom he has a mad crush, and agonizes afterward about possibly having disrespected her, though she is clearly interested in having an affair with him. In another story, Nachman wonders whether it is proper to burst the balloon of a mathematician who has claimed to solve a celebrated problem by showing him where he has gone wrong in his demonstration. In yet another story, he broods over whether to tell his best friend, Norbert, that his wife, Adele, has been cheating on him.

> People who told unbearable news to friends, as if it were their duty, then felt very good about themselves while their friends felt miserable—Nachman was not like those people. Besides, to feel good about oneself was important only to narcissists….
>
> [He does tell the wife, Adele, with whom he is also friends, that she is talking nonsense when she says she was "helpless" to resist the affair.] "I don't believe that experience, for its own sake, is the highest value…. There are limits."
>
> "I think you mean morals."
>
> "O.K., morals. Yes, morals. You have something against morals?"

In *The Nachman Stories,* Michaels openly acknowledged that he was a moralist. Of course, he had been one from the start; but now he was willing to identify with a good man who insisted that we take responsibility for our actions, that experience is not the end-all. I am not saying that Michaels became Nachman any more than he had earlier been Liebowitz; but I am saying that he'd reached a stage in his life when he was interested in exploring a surrogate self who believed in boundaries, in acting like a mensch, and whose sense of value would derive in large part from work. Nachman's friend Norbert mocks him: "You live a small life. Somebody gives you a pencil and a piece of paper and you are a happy Nachman. Like a kid on a beach." Nachman calmly explains: "When I solve a problem, I collect a piece of the real." Here, I think Michaels was directly speaking about his life as a writer.

This is how Leonard Michaels put it in a journal entry: "Writers die twice, first their bodies, then their works, but they produce book after book, like peacocks spreading their tails, a gorgeous flare of color soon shlepped through the dust."

That "shlepped," placed where it is, testifies to his capacity to goose a sentence. If prose makers can be divided into sentence writers and paragraph writers, then Michaels was more of a sentence writer, in the manner of Isaac Babel, who famously declared that a period should come with the piercing effect of a bullet. But "shlepped" also signifies Michaels's debt to Yiddish. Many of his vivid sentences exist in a kind of syntactical exchange between English and Yiddish inflections: "Perhaps a girl with so much needed someone like him—a misery." Just before he died, he wrote a fine essay in *Threepenny Review* about the Yiddish language. And it was surely no accident that he gave his last protagonist the same name as that great Hasidic storyteller, Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav. Michaels never stopped reflecting on the condition of being Jewish. Now that he is gone, it is easier to place him in a broader context, as part of that astonishing flowering of American Jewish writing that included Bellow, Malamud, Mailer and Roth, toward which he can be seen as both filial heir and mischievous critic. ■

Company Man

LYNN GARAFOLA

THE WORLDS OF LINCOLN KIRSTEIN. By Martin Duberman. Knopf. 723 pp. $37.50.

From the 1930s until the '80s Lincoln Kirstein was a power broker of the ballet world, a mandarin of high art who was instrumental in transforming American ballet from a form of popular culture to a sophisticated art of the elite. Kirstein was the *éminence grise* of the New York City Ballet, the visionary who brought its co-founder, Russian choreographer George Balanchine, to the United States in 1933, stuck with him, defended him and funded him, ultimately sacrificing his own artistic ambitions to their common enterprise. He was also a prolific writer, a poet, a novelist, a brilliant if sometimes eccentric scholar of ballet and a penetrating critic whose interests ranged from Mexican mural painting to the martial arts of Japan.

A Harvard graduate from a well-to-do Jewish family, Kirstein was an elitist with the sympathies of a populist; he marched for civil rights in Selma, believed in high art at popular prices and even contemplated

Lynn Garafola, a professor of dance at Barnard College, is the author, most recently, of Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance.

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joining the Communist Party in the 1930s. He was an unflagging champion of American ballet and used his power to promote companies and artists he admired, which by the '60s chiefly meant Balanchine, the New York City Ballet and its affiliated School of American Ballet (SAB). He could also be highhanded, even dictatorial. He had no qualms about hijacking foundation monies, eviscerating the Juilliard dance division or keeping modern dance from a place at Lincoln Center—all to secure the triumph of the company he had labored for years to institutionalize. He was the ultimate insider; yet he was an outsider, too, not only because he was Jewish (although he later converted to Catholicism) but also because he was gay. Kirstein's life is a case study of the relationship between art and power.

Kirstein died in 1996 at the age of 88. He had outlived Balanchine by more than a decade and left, along with books, artwork and a carriage house off Gramercy Park, a trove of unpublished writings documenting his life since his teenage years. The most important cache, including the diaries he kept from 1919 to 1936, was at the New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins dance division, a major recipient of Kirstein's largesse over the years. The rest, scattered in dozens of archives, testified to the many facets of his identity as a collector, collaborator, patron, scholar, arts impresario and fundraiser. The Kirstein executors kept a tight lid on the NYPL materials, reserving them for use by Kirstein's authorized biographers—essayist Claudia Roth Pierpont, who abandoned the project, and the distinguished historian Martin Duberman, who has written a compelling if flawed account of his outsize subject, by far the most substantive contribution to the celebrations marking the Kirstein centenary.

In many ways Duberman was an ideal choice for this daunting undertaking. He is the author of several highly regarded biographies, notably *Paul Robeson*, about the African-American actor, singer and activist, and histories such as *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community* and *Stonewall*, which offer richly detailed, innovative accounts of the American cultural and social past. He is a playwright and a novelist, the founder and former director of the City University's Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies—like Kirstein, a man of many parts. Moreover, as a historian steeped in archival research, Duberman had no fear of the boxes that awaited him. He was familiar with many of the histories that overlapped in Kirstein's life. Moreover, as a scholar of the gay past, he could do

— A Saner View of Life —

At first sight, it would appear that the world is now in deeper crisis than ever before. War and terrorism have quickened the pace of events and filled the hearts of millions with fear. Were this the true reading of the present situation there would indeed be cause for fear and lamentation. Happily, this view is superficial and hides the many changes for the better which, quietly, with little attention, are likewise taking place. War and terror are sensational and make potent news. Far-reaching actions which enhance the lives of millions seldom make headlines, and are lost amid the tumult of imperious governments and uneasy dictators.

"Peace will be achieved only with justice and freedom for all."

United Nations agencies

The world is deeply indebted to the many United Nations agencies whose careful, selfless work goes steadily on amid the rhetoric and bravado of the power-drunk politicians. The time is fast coming when men* will realize that the needs of the world are the needs of men and women everywhere: for food and work, for health-care and education. These are the priorities which should guide men's actions and engage their energy and resources. These are the perennial needs of all; humanity neglects them at its peril.

Specialist non-governmental groups likewise add their insights and researches, awakening men to the dangers in the headlong rush to further abuse this already ailing planet.

Many see who erstwhile did not. Many walk who formerly sat and watched their brothers run and play. For the first time in their lives, the world is full of hope for many who suffered in silence.

To these quiet and patient ones, life is opening its windows, letting in the sunshine and fresh air. Through the work of the many agencies new, invigorating energy now flows, and the people respond and rejoice. These, the servers, are the true heroes of this time. Not those who drop the bombs from the high clouds but those who sense the needs of their brothers and sisters, and act, no matter the cost.

When Maitreya makes his appearance, openly, to all, he will inspire the creation of a saner attitude to life grounded in serving the needs of men and women everywhere. He will show that the conflicts of the present are not inevitable. That leaders of nations have a responsibility to humanity at large, and not alone to their subjective feelings or ideology. He will call for caution and wisdom with regard to today's weapons of terrible power, and warn of the fruitlessness of war 'for the sake of peace'.

Peace, he will show, is not difficult to find if honestly sought. Peace, he will say, will be achieved only with justice and freedom for all. Thus will Maitreya set the target for change. Thus will men be inspired to take the simple step into the unknown and to see the fulfilment of the dreams and longings for peace which men have for long held in their hearts.

This article, published in *Share International* magazine, was written by a Master of Wisdom. The Masters, headed by Maitreya, the World Teacher, are highly advanced teachers and advisors of humanity who are planning to work openly in the world very soon.

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*men is a general term meaning humankind

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justice to Kirstein's sexuality, discussing it with intelligence and placing it in historical context. Although Duberman had little knowledge of ballet or the history of American dance, as he acknowledges, he could locate Kirstein in the far broader arena of American life.

In many ways *The Worlds of Lincoln Kirstein* succeeds at doing just that, above all in the first half of this very long book, which follows Kirstein from his birth in Rochester in 1907 to New York City in the mid-'30s. With mastery and in sometimes overwhelming detail, Duberman describes an early life of privilege—boarding schools, Harvard, European holidays—infused with a sense of noblesse oblige inherited from his father, Louis Kirstein, a department store executive and philanthropist, who named his first-born son after the Great Emancipator. With his wide-ranging intellect and passionate interest in the arts, Kirstein *fils* made his mark early. In 1928, while still a Harvard undergraduate, he co-founded *Hound and Horn*, a literary magazine modeled on T.S. Eliot's *Criterion*, editing and supporting it financially until 1934, when he allowed it to fold. In 1928, with his classmates Edward M.M. Warburg and John Walker III, Kirstein founded the Harvard Society of Contemporary Art. The Society was a forerunner of the Museum of Modern Art, with which Kirstein enjoyed a sometimes rocky twenty-year relationship as a member of the advisory committee, sometime curator and founder of MoMA's short-lived dance archive.

Moving to New York City in 1931, Kirstein met everyone worth knowing in High Bohemia—the writer and photographer Carl Van Vechten (who introduced him to Harlem), the radical *salonnière* Muriel Draper (with whom he had an affair) and the painters and composers he would later involve in his ballet activities. While living on an allowance from his father (with gifts from his mother to cover overdrafts), he gave generously to artists and writers, left-wing causes and, by the mid-'30s, the School of American Ballet and the first companies to emerge from his collaboration with Balanchine, the American Ballet and Ballet Caravan. Kirstein's passion for dance was awakened by the ballerina Anna Pavlova and fanned by Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, which he saw in Europe in the mid '20s; classes in New York with the choreographer Michel Fokine; and collaboration with Romola Nijinsky on a biography of her husband, the great Diaghilev star Vaslav Nijinsky, whom Kirstein venerated and made the subject of a coffee table book published in 1975. In 1933, after some hesitation and with the financial support of "Eddie" Warburg, he invited Balanchine to come to the United States to create what Kirstein called an "American ballet." Although fifteen years would elapse before the New York City Ballet came into existence, the die was cast. Whatever his other interests, ballet would be Kirstein's greatest love.

Kirstein related these events many times, most notably in *Thirty Years: Lincoln Kirstein's The New York City Ballet* (1978). But as Duberman's biography makes clear, the real story is far more complex. Thanks to Kirstein's diaries, supplemented by his voluminous correspondence, Duberman gives the most complete picture yet of Balanchine's early years in the United States—his first night in New York marveling at the skyline from a room at the Barbizon Plaza Hotel; his unhappiness at finding that the company he expected to direct didn't exist; his many bouts of ill health, some possibly psychosomatic in origin; his troubled relationship with Kirstein, who wanted to play a creative role in their joint enterprise, a role the choreographer denied him—the revelations go on and on. Through Kirstein's day-

Madman With Broom

The realist crows return
at earliest morning.
And the madman with broom,

madman in his nightshirt
with a broom, he too returns.
He thinks to roust the crows

from the mulberry boughs
by jabbing and swirling his broom,
by crazily twirling his broom

in the wet summer air
and hurling curses skyward
beyond the boughs and the crows

towards the fading gods among the fading stars.
But the realist crows know
it is only a man

in a nightshirt after dawn,
that the broom is a broom
and that his cries are nothing more

than words and half-words
the heavy air will swallow.
They rise anyway from the tree

as best to quiet him
and let morning be morning.
Soon enough they'll return again

by twos and threes, settling among
the spreading limbs, their laughter the same
before and after.

Michael Palmer

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to-day impressions one glimpses the hopes and fears Balanchine never put in writing, or expressed in dances lost to oblivion. Yet amid the chaos and disappointments of Balanchine's first months in America, Kirstein stumbled upon his future. As Duberman writes, "For the first time in his life, Lincoln knew in a profound and sustained way…where he wanted to concentrate his time, talent, and formidable energy."

Duberman lingers on the early decades of Kirstein's life so long, one suspects, because it is not yet a ballet story. There are numerous sidebars—Philip Johnson's involvement with Huey Long's neofascist movement and admiration for Hitler, Esther Strachey's anti-Semitism, Warburg's psychoanalysis—that add little to the core narrative. When it comes to dance, to be sure, he regales us with details—tiffs with Warburg, conflicts with Vladimir Dimitriev, who ran SAB with Kirstein, meetings with critics and collaborators, ideas for new productions, rehearsal schedules—but the implications often remain unexplored, in large part because Duberman has dipped only superficially into the ballet literature. He devotes two chapters to Ballet Caravan, the lively chamber company founded and directed by Kirstein to showcase American talent and produce ballets on American subjects, but says almost nothing about the ballets themselves or how works like the darkly compelling *Billy the Kid* (1938), set to a commissioned score by Aaron Copland, married populist themes with social criticism and modernist forms so typical of Depression-era art. Moreover, Duberman never quite places Ballet Caravan, which established Kirstein as a major player in the American dance world, within the context of ballet of the 1930s and early '40s, a period dominated by "international" (i.e., Russian émigré) companies but increasingly challenged by nationalist-minded enterprises such as England's Vic-Wells (later Sadler's Wells) Ballet and Kirstein's Ballet Caravan.

When Duberman begins to generalize, he often finds himself on shaky ground. For instance, he attributes Balanchine's "sadism," which Kirstein mentions several times in his diaries of the 1930s, to "unsettled health," because "over the years the overwhelming bulk of testimony from dancers who studied with him comes down on the side of adoration and gratitude." Yet there are any number of memoirs, including Edward Villella's *Prodigal Son* and Gelsey Kirkland's *Dancing on My Grave*, that reveal acts of cruelty and humiliation that the dancers seldom protested: Their jobs depended on their silence. Duberman ascribes the collapse of the American Ballet solely to Warburg's withdrawal of financial support, without acknowledging Balanchine's efforts to keep it going alone and the hints in the dance press that Balanchine might be jumping ship—that is, abandoning Kirstein and joining the Russian "enemy" demonized in Kirstein's highly partisan tract *Blast at Ballet: A Corrective for the American Audience* (1938), which had a bald eagle on its cover. Balanchine didn't join the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1938, but two years later, as Duberman notes, he gave the first of several works to it, initiating a relationship that lasted for the next six years. Although Duberman echoes Kirstein in dismissing the "tired" repertory of the era's émigré companies, it included, as Jack Anderson and others have pointed out, Léonide Massine's "symphonic" ballets, the most important body of plotless works prior to Balanchine's epoch-making creations of the 1940s.

Because of Kirstein, Balanchine and his art stood at the center of an emerging network of gay artists, composers and dancers.

Another major theme of Duberman's biography is Kirstein's life as a gay man. Although Kirstein married Fidelma Cadmus in 1941, he reserved his deepest feelings for men and preferred their company as friends. Duberman tells us more than we really need to know about Kirstein's romances, his casual lovers, even his incestuous encounters with his brother George, publisher of *The Nation* from 1955 to 1965. Many of his collaborators were gay; indeed, because of Kirstein, Balanchine and his art stood at the center of a rapidly crystallizing network of gay visual artists, composers, photographers and dancers who gravitated to the ballet world in part because it provided a safe haven for them. Ironically, Balanchine's art, which turned obsessively on the mystery, unattainability and power of women, developed in a context of homoeroticism. Duberman doesn't have much to say about this, or about the glimpses of Balanchine's erotic life in Kirstein's diaries—the choreographer's "casual fucking," "obscene drawings" and interest in "screw[ing] a negress" and, the most astonishing revelation of all, that in 1936 Balanchine got the dancer Holly Howard pregnant and that she had an abortion, a procedure that was not only illegal at the time but also dangerous. One wonders how many other affairs and abortions have vanished from the official annals of Balanchine's life.

For a gay man of his time, Kirstein lived a remarkably uninhibited and open life. He never came out to his parents, and only toward the end of his life did he intimate in print that he was gay. He stayed in the closet but didn't hide there, or use it to stash inconvenient lovers and memories. Even during the darkest days of the McCarthy period, he followed his passions—creative, intellectual and erotic. Like Diaghilev, who founded the original Ballets Russes company, Kirstein was a gay hero. He lived to the fullest and left a mark on the culture of his time—the outsider who became the quintessential insider.

Duberman devotes close to 300 pages, about half the book, to Kirstein's passage through the 1930s. The Kirstein who emerges is a young, impassioned idealist, bursting with ideas for ballets, books and collaborations, an artistic rebel of the upper crust willing to use his wealth, connections and unbounded energy to promote his sometimes idiosyncratic vision. But Duberman's focus on the '30s creates a structural imbalance. Kirstein's activities beginning in the late '50s and continuing until the early '70s surely deserve more than the sixty or so pages Duberman allots them. Bouts of mental illness notwithstanding—Kirstein was bipolar and was hospitalized at various points in the '50s and '60s—it was in these years that he transformed the New York City Ballet from a precarious avant-garde undertaking into a mainstream cultural institution. He did this by means fair and foul. In 1959 he secured the first of several Ford Foundation grants for the SAB, followed in 1963 by an award of $7.7 million to NYCB and six companies, including two that had been in existence for less than a year, with close ties to NYCB. Unprecedented in the history of American arts patronage, these grants, which continued into the 1970s, conferred legitimacy upon the Kirstein-Balanchine enterprise at the expense of other dance organizations with a claim to foundation largesse. No other company, however, had a Kirstein in its ranks, someone who could pick up the phone and lunch with policymakers like W. McNeil Lowry, the Ford Foundation vice president who developed the organization's arts program and later published a two-part profile of Kirstein in *The New Yorker*.

Kirstein played an even more highhanded role in the machinations surrounding

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occupancy of the New York State Theater, where NYCB moved in 1964. Intent on securing the house for NYCB rather than sharing it with modern dance and other potential competitors, Kirstein enlisted his old friend Nelson Rockefeller, then governor of New York, to give full control of the theater to City Center, NYCB's legal "parent," rather than to Lincoln Center, whose president, the composer William Schuman, wanted at least two permanent dance constituents at the Center. Thus, the Theater for the Dance, as the New York State Theater was often called throughout the 1950s and early '60s, was transformed from a showcase for both classical and modern dance into a home for NYCB and its City Center sibling, the New York City Opera.

Modern dance suffered an additional humiliation with the 1965 agreement between SAB and the Juilliard School of Music. Signed by Kirstein, Balanchine and Juilliard president Peter Mennin, the agreement nearly destroyed Juilliard's highly respected dance division and stirred up a storm of negative criticism from the dance world—as did the 1963 Ford Foundation grants and Kirstein's public opposition to artistic diversity at the New York State Theater. Now that NYCB had entered what Kirstein gleefully called "the Big Time," both his megalomania and his contempt for modern dance knew no bounds. Even as the world of modern and postmodern dance continued to flourish, he railed against it as a "sideshow" of "oddballs, freaks, and phonies." Kirstein's later writing was not only out of step with the dance world but also intellectually irrelevant to the growing community of dance scholars.

Duberman, alas, glosses over these pivotal episodes in Kirstein's career as a power broker. Far more than in the earlier chapters, the limitations of Duberman's method—his reliance on Kirstein's letters and diaries at the expense of secondary sources—are evident, rendering Duberman unable to offer an interpretive corrective to partisan or self-serving claims. Too often, he merely echoes Kirstein's judgments—i.e., ballet at Juilliard was poor, its dance program "wastefully bungled." The appointment and dismissal of Robert Lindgren, the founder and longtime director of the dance division of the North Carolina School of the Arts, as president of SAB after Kirstein's retirement, receives exactly three sentences. Kirstein "eventually saw that he'd made a mistake," Duberman explains, but given the stories that circulated in the ballet community—that Lindgren had antagonized SAB conservatives by

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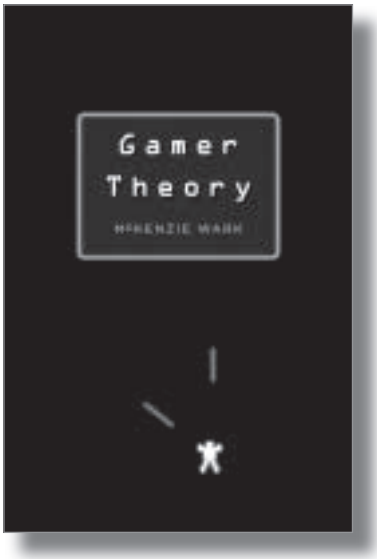

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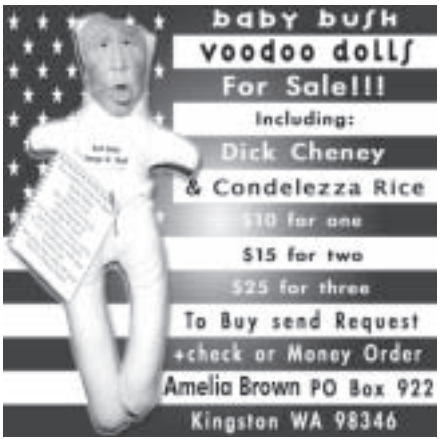

seeking to introduce modern dance classes into the curriculum and modernize the school's administration—it also seems clear that in the dispute Kirstein refused to stand up to Peter Martins, the Danish premier danseur who had succeeded Balanchine as NYCB artistic director after Balanchine died in 1983.

Duberman's cursory treatment of this incident, compared with the many pages he devotes to the debates over Balanchine's successor at NYCB, seems odd, given the centrality of SAB to the Kirstein-Balanchine enterprise and to Kirstein's elitist vision. He called it the Harvard of ballet, although by the 1990s its reputation as a national academy had slipped and its curriculum, in part because of its rejection of other idioms, had failed to keep pace with changes in professional ballet training elsewhere. Although Kirstein himself was a consummate intellectual, as president of SAB he never insisted that the school introduce an academic component. As he famously told the critic John Russell, "Our kids are taught to have brains in their feet. There may be one or two who've opened a book, but I've yet to meet them." Kirstein's loyalty to Martins in the face of growing attacks on his stewardship of NYCB revealed to what extent he was a company man.

Kirstein was a maverick, a larger-than-life figure who believed in the transcendent power of high art, the cause he served from his teens to his death. He was a patron with the vision of an artist, a power broker with the mind of an intellectual, a modernist fascinated by the idea of legacies and "apostolic" successions. He raised money and spent it generously, along with his considerable energies, on creating an institutional foundation for ballet and an aesthetic identity that earned it a permanent place in the American cultural polity. Like many people, Kirstein started out as a rebel and ended up a pillar of the establishment. He built institutions that will long survive him. His tragedy is that the obsessions of his later years rendered his vision increasingly irrelevant. ■

FILMS

Anatomy of a Murder

STUART KLAWANS

A MIGHTY HEART • SICKO • CZECH DREAM • UNBORN IN THE USA

Given a broadband connection and a little persistence, you will be able to locate online a short video titled "The Slaughter of the Spy-Journalist, the Jew Daniel Pearl." Made in February 2002 and circulated continually ever since, it is, first and above all, the record of a murder carried out in Pakistan by jihadis with a *Wall Street Journal* reporter as their victim. But to call this artifact a record is also to say that it is an audiovisual production: something that had a budget (undisclosed), cast (secured by kidnapping), script, director and distribution scheme. Only a madman would discuss "The Slaughter" in formal cinematic terms, but only a fool would deny it's a film.

Michael Winterbottom's film *A Mighty Heart*, based on the memoir of the same title by Pearl's widow, Mariane, therefore belongs to a peculiarly self-conscious genre: that of movies about making movies. Here, too, you would have to be dead to all sense to consider form before content, since this film's claim on your attention has to do with its veracity: You are to believe you're seeing a more-or-less accurate account of a real event. And yet, true to type, *A Mighty Heart* also invites you to pause over its aesthetic features, which include a star performance by Angelina Jolie (as Mariane) and a distinctive visual style (created by Winterbottom and his frequent collaborator, cinematographer Marcel Zyskind).

The paradox of this artifice is that it makes *A Mighty Heart* more honest. "The Slaughter" belongs to the most dishonest of genres, propaganda, shot to satisfy hatred and incite further violence. Since its release, it has also circulated (in image and description) as a kind of pornography, enjoyed by those Westerners who get hot and bothered at the thought of Muslim hordes. But even though *A Mighty Heart* acknowledges (without showing) this film-within-a-film, it does so without sensationalism, fathoming the horror of "The Slaughter" yet refraining from any attempt to crank up the audience. This is a moral choice made possible by the creation of a certain aesthetic

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distance—and I'm not sure anyone but Winterbottom could have pulled it off.

A chronic confounder of expectations, he has taken special pleasure over the years in merging fiction with documentary, whether his story was set in Manchester (as in the rockudrama *24 Hour Party People*) or in the part of the world where Daniel Pearl died. Around the time "The Slaughter" was recorded, Winterbottom was wrapping up production on his astonishing feature *In This World*, about the journey of two Afghan refugees from a camp in Pakistan to the streets of England. The principal cast members, Jamal Udin Torabi and Enayatullah, were nonprofessionals who essentially played themselves in a story that was based on their experiences and shot on location. At the same time, though, *In This World* was a fiction, unmistakably scripted and shaped, which had been staged for the digital-video camera. Three years later, Winterbottom returned to Pakistan and Central Asia, and to the same mixture of elements, to make *The Road to Guantánamo*. In part, the film was a talking-heads deposition in which three young British men of Pakistani background gave their account of falling into US custody in Camp Delta. The rest of the film was a re-enactment in which actors took the place of the witnesses.

You sensed in both these pictures that Winterbottom wanted to interpose himself as little as possible between you and the events. What Jamal Udin Torabi and the Tipton Three narrated, he put on screen with as much immediacy as possible in the evident belief that their stories were true. His task was merely—what? to transcribe? to translate? to realize? He was too smart to imply there was a simple definition of his role yet too candid in his sympathies to efface himself.

So it is with his third foray into this territory. *A Mighty Heart* opens with scenes of warfare (one of which, I think, was patched in from *The Road to Guantánamo*), followed quickly by images of Karachi, where Mariane and Daniel Pearl were stationed in early 2002. Later in the film, you'll get atmospheric effects (Winterbottom likes the way birds circle over the rooftops at dawn and dusk); but for the moment the city seems to be nothing but a throbbing jumble of buses, cars and motorbikes. "How do you find one man amid all this?" Mariane asks on the soundtrack, in tones of sorrow and wonder. So the theme is announced. *A Mighty Heart* will be about a search and not a discovery; about the value of an individual life and the reality of multitudes.

So urgent is the search that the film is shot largely with a hand-held digital video camera, as if someone had chased after the protagonists and failed to capture them fully. Jump cuts signal the gaps and speed the action forward. You get the impression that you're watching a peculiarly rapid and disorderly police procedural in which the overwhelming rush of detail is condensed by Mariane into a whiteboard diagram: a dense tangle of names and arrows, crisscrossing like yet another Karachi traffic jam, that show Daniel's possible abductors and their interrelationships.

There's something breathless (or even *Breathless*) in this main body of the film, and something like a Harrison Ford action thriller. But there's also a strange inner calm, thanks to the performances of the two stars. The less celebrated of them, though central to the movie, is that of the Indian actor Irrfan Khan in the role of a Pakistani counterterrorism detective known as Captain. Khan has played this sort of tough-guy part many times before; but if you've seen him in Mira Nair's recent *The Namesake*, you know he can also be thoughtful in demeanor, gaining the audience's instant sympathy with his mournful round face. Khan brings some of that inwardness to Captain, even when he's conducting a none-too-pretty interrogation. You feel for him, as much as for Mariane, when a turn in the investigation leaves him in a characteristic posture, speechless with dismay.

As for the big star, consort of producer Brad Pitt, for whom the project was set in motion: Jolie walks around under a wig that the Bride of Frankenstein might have worn to her senior prom, speaking in a French (Romanian? Turkish?) accent heard nowhere but in her immediate vicinity, and it doesn't matter. Her Mariane is entirely convincing as a woman who refuses to panic or even to raise her voice more than necessary. ("Call me a car," she says evenly to a colleague as the worst begins to unfold; and when asked, very reasonably, where she intends to go, she replies in the same measured tone, "I don't know. Call me a car.") This self-possession figures in *A Mighty Heart* as more than an admirable personality trait. It's an act of conscience exercised by someone who can stand against organized viciousness without turning herself into a holy warrior. What makes this strength credible? Not any outbursts of showy acting (they almost don't exist) and not the thin disguise, but a wonder of nature: Jolie's air of being perfectly comfortable in her skin.

Maybe it sounds strange to make a quasi-documentary movie about the agonies inflicted by Islamist killers and then to have the meaning rest on a famous female body. But if you wanted to sum up

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NATIONAL

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NEW YORK

Sicko

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the fears of all fundamentalists everywhere, what two words would do better than "Angelina Jolie"? This isn't to say that Karachi's masses are short on substantive grievances. (Winterbottom knows these people are hurt. It's one of the points of *A Mighty Heart*, *The Road to Guantánamo* and *In This World*.) But the people among them who murdered Daniel Pearl achieved nothing substantial other than the production of their damned video.

Let their crime be answered by cops. The video should be answered by another film—a humane one—with an icon of womanly freedom at its heart.

Short Takes: If I review Michael Moore's *Sicko* in this issue of *The Nation*, I will be jumping the release date. If I wait until the next issue, you will all have seen the film. What should I do?

I should tell you that *Sicko* contains only one of Moore's practical jokes, and that it comes toward the end. (It's the now-notorious Cuban expedition, subject of all the advance news reports, in which Moore sought socialist medical care for a group of ailing Americans. Missing from those preliminary reports was the point of the joke: The ostensible destination was Guantánamo, where you can get first-rate taxpayer-supported hospital care on American territory, provided you're an accused terrorist.) *Sicko* also contains only one of Moore's movie parodies and very few pieces of dredged-up White House memorabilia. (The notable exception: an excerpt from the Nixon tapes laying out the rationale for promoting health-maintenance organizations: "The less care they give 'em, the more money they make.")

So what's left of the usual Moore material, other than the old TV commercials that he sprinkles around, like sugar on cornflakes? The answer is people—ordinary working people, of the kind who rarely make it into a widely released movie, telling about their experiences with the medical system and collaborating with Moore in the filmmaking. I don't think he's ever before relied so heavily on so many people. They help him make his argument about the failures of American medicine (or, rather, the successes of American insurance-gouging). But to Moore's great credit, the debating points never seem more important than the individuals who back them up.

What will you see in *Sicko*? Heartbroken, worried, angry, feisty, funny and valiant people. They're irrefutable.

Since you won't get the pleasures of a performance-art documentary from *Sicko*, let me recommend a weird little item from Prague, *Czech Dream*, which is opening at the IFC Center in New York. Called "a film reality show" by its perpetrators, Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda, *Czech Dream* shows step by step how in 2003 the filmmakers created a promotional campaign for a fictitious big-box store. They hired a graphic artist to design a logo. They retained a big advertising firm. ("Our ads work even if the product sucks, or doesn't exist.") A composer put together a pop song, complete with wailing inspirational soprano and children's chorus. On May 31, 2003, opening day, these lures drew several thousand people to a meadow, where the "Czech Dream" market turned out to be a piece of painted canvas scenery 328 feet long. Some of this is hilarious, and some appalling. (Infirm old people in search of a bargain staggered through the meadow with their canes so Klusák and Remunda could make fun of consumerism.) Either way, the filmmakers stayed in the meadow and faced their public. That part wasn't a dream.

Finally, a word about a documentary that's straightforward reportage, and of the most useful kind: *Unborn in the USA: Inside the War on Abortion*. Starting in Colorado Springs at the Focus on the Family Institute, where Christian evangelical college students are trained as antiabortion missionaries, filmmakers Stephen Fell and Will Thompson interviewed activists around the country, recorded their rallies and demonstrations and documented their evolving tactics. "Why the Pro-Lifers Are Winning," says the film's promotional handout. The slogan may be only too accurate. For information: www.firstrunfeatures.com. ■

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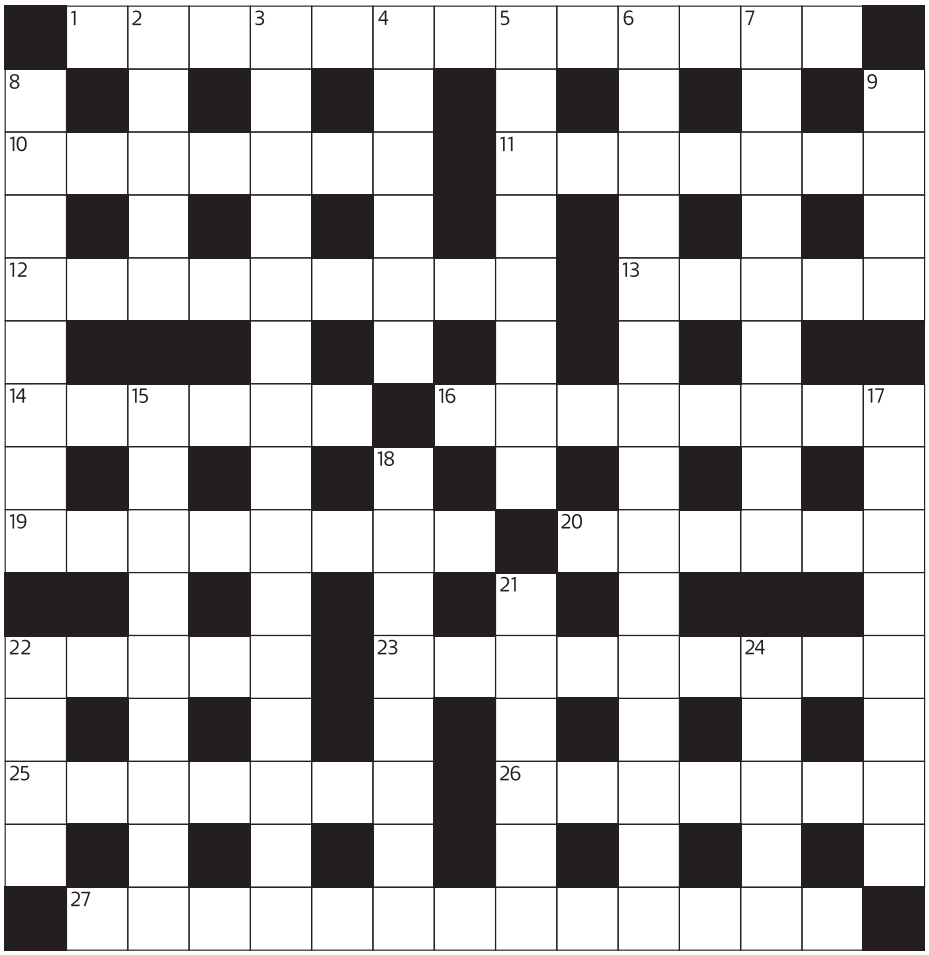

ACROSS

1 What a certain state must have been under Huey. Ouch! (4-9)

10 Mark seems to have a large number with an opposite meaning… (7)

11 …being opposed to Anthony in a different version. (Burma Shave had lots of it.) (7)

12 Ended the lines in the exercise book, which nullifies a previous judgment. (9)

13 The composer has Harlequin starting out rather confused. (5)

14 Doesn't start out to lust in an awful way—but one might consider it a slight example. (6)

16 A he-man in old Rome, getting the outback thus—but an excellent player. (8)

19 What you're holding might be filled with powder. (8)

20 A little firm at this place, so you'll need to stick together for the solution. (6)

22 Just a word—and in Paris, too—but it might sound good! (5)

23 Evidently this fighting took a lot of effort, you could say. (Raj art won—though convoluted.) (6,3)

25 Cast something ahead of time, being official in the prom performance (7).

26 Reacted to a dangerous situation. (7)

27 Suggests the ocean voyage of Columbus, running back and forth. (13)

DOWN

2 and **24** One has a sober future, if so. (That's where paint went in a certain movie.) (2,3,5)

3 Not very precise statements made by such as Powell and Eisenhower? (15)

4 Remove from the bundt pan, as the global organization reaches the millennium at an advanced age. (6)

5 Tires out the joint where the Admiral might be found. (8)

6 People like Nathan Hale do more than just turn things over in their minds. (15)

7 Someone who is way up next to Lithuania, where certain little ones are supposed to keep busy. (5,4)

8 Swift beasts might display it, being course or brutal. (8)

9 Put up with something probably white, if at the 7. (4)

15 Typical tourist, but if one is the last, he has to have the first. (9)

17 Stay on the horse too long, and you'll have to take precedence. (8)

18 Referring to the body, the act Naomi played, described as a "bomb." (8)

21 An unruly pooch has a point, which might be helpful in the shower. (6)

22 No one could say it's a well constructed poem, but you don't have to be so glum. (4)

24 See 2

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3088

A	S	P	I	R	A	T	E	S	■	W	A	T	E	R
L	■	R	■	E	■	I	■	U	■	A	■	R	■	E
A	R	O	U	S	E	D	■	B	O	L	T	I	N	G
M	■	F	■	C	■	I	■	L	■	L	■	R	■	I
O	F	F	■	H	A	N	D	E	D	■	N	E	S	S
■	■	E	■	E	■	E	■	T	■	A	■	M	■	T
P	A	R	A	D	I	S	E	■	A	P	P	E	A	R
E	■	■	■	U	■	S	■	B	■	P	■	■	■	A
T	O	W	A	L	L	■	R	E	M	E	M	B	E	R
U	■	R	■	E	■	S	■	R	■	N	■	U	■	■
L	A	I	R	■	L	O	G	G	E	D	■	T	H	E
A	■	N	■	T	■	N	■	A	■	A	■	C	■	P
N	I	G	E	R	I	A	■	M	E	G	O	H	M	S
C	■	E	■	O	■	T	■	O	■	E	■	E	■	O
E	A	R	L	Y	■	A	N	T	I	S	E	R	U	M

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A.

Larimar — The World's Rarest Gemstone?

Few people have ever seen a Larimar stone, and far fewer still are so fortunate as to actually own this rare gem with the ethereal blue color. In the secretive world of the international gem trade there is a spectacularly talented designer, Marah Lago, and not surprisingly she is the daughter of a celebrated artist. Marah told us the tale of *Larimar* and related that the gemstone comes only from a single remote mountainside, in the Dominican Republic, on a single kilometer, and is not found anywhere else in the entire world. This makes the *Larimar* stone 10,000 times rarer than diamonds, rarer than tanzanite and rarer even than the finest rubies and emeralds. But luckily, the prices are not controlled by a price fixing syndicate so the rarest stone is still affordable.

The history of the discovery of *Larimar* appears to be shrouded in mystery. Uncovered by powerful seismic activity, the blue gems were slowly dragged by rain waters down the slopes of the mountain to the sea and washed up on the shores of a small fishing village. An island artist fell in love with it and then scoured the island for twenty years before finding the only lode of this elusive blue treasure. It is said that this artist named the gemstone after his beautiful young daughter, Larissa, and joined her name with Mar, the Spanish word for sea.

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SAVE DARFUR

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All we are saying is give peace a chance.

John Lennon & Yoko Ono, Montreal Bed-In 1969. Photo: Ivor Sharp/©Yoko Ono. Lyrics to "Give Peace a Chance" © Sony/ATV Tunes LLC. Used by Permission.

John would have been proud of this album.

Proud that a new generation of artists is speaking and singing out for human rights. Proud that they're singing his songs to rally global support for the desperate people of Darfur. And proud to be aligned with Amnesty International in this effort. I feel strongly that all people of the world are partners with Amnesty International which, with its activities, ideals and history of action, is effective and wise.

John wrote his songs with a very deep love for the human race and a concern for its future. He believed with his heart it was possible to create a better world. He also believed that each one of us plays a role in changing the world. I hope the Instant Karma campaign has the ability to not only save lives in Darfur, but to create the next generation of activists willing to stand up for the rights of others and the basic human rights we all share, now and in the future.

The challenge is daunting but these goals are achievable if we all put our hearts and minds to the task.

Imagine all of us living life in peace.
It is too beautiful to just be a dream.

Yoko Ono

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